

M.N. Dhalla: *History of Zoroastrianism* (1938)

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

Note: I have added terms in square brackets [] to facilitate searches consistent with other texts on this web site. I have also expanded some of the citations, again in square brackets []. Page numbers are also in square brackets, and appear [in this font](#). All of the page numbers have anchor tags, so can be referenced individually, for example, <http://www.avesta.org/dhalla/dhalla1.htm#p30>. Likewise, the chapters can be referenced, for example, <http://www.avesta.org/dhalla/dhalla1.htm#chap3>. Obvious typos have been silently corrected.

Please let me know if you find any typos, or have suggestions for improving this e-text or web site. Thanks. -JHP, May 2003.

History of Zoroastrianism

BY

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

*idha apām vijasâiti
vanghuhi daena mâzdayasnaish
vispâish avi karshvân yâish hapta.*

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

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

*at hvo vangheush vahyo nâ aibijamyât
ye nâo erezush savangho patho sîshoit
ahyâ angheush astvato mananghaschâ
haithyeng âstîsh yeng â shaetî ahuro
aredro thwâvâns huzentushe spento mazdâ.*

"May that man attain to better than the good
Who helps teaching us the upright paths of blessedness

Of this material world and that of the spirit
-- The veritable universe wherein pervades Ahura --
That faithful, wise, and holy man is like unto thee, O Mazda."
- Zarathushtra

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Notes:

INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Work. This book is the revised and much enlarged edition of my *Zoroastrian Theology*, which has been out of print for the past fifteen years. The publication of my *Zoroastrian Civilization*, and *Our Perfecting World, Zarathushtra's Way of Life*, and professional duties have delayed the completion of the work. I have inserted new material in several chapters and added nineteen new chapters to the book. I have given a concise account of the religious beliefs and practices prevalent among the Zoroastrians and their early Iranian ancestors from the pre-Gathic times to the present day and named the book *History of Zoroastrianism*.

Arrangement and method. I have divided the entire period of the history of Zoroastrianism on the linguistic basis. The earliest Zoroastrian documents are the Gathas, written in the Gathic dialect. They represent the earliest phase of the religion of Zoroaster. But ancient Iran had a religion which preceded Zoroastrianism in point of time. I have labelled this period pre-Gathic; for its beginning is lost in remote antiquity, and the advent of Zoroaster brings its end.

The time when Zoroaster flourished is a moot question. The approximate date at which he lived is 1000 B.C. Zoroaster revolutionizes the religious life of the Iranians, which hitherto represented the evolutionary phase of religion. It was the movement in which we find the religious thought creeping for ages to rise from the lower to the higher level. To put this in another way, the pre-Gathic religion of Iran is the evolution of the religious thought of many men and many ages; Zoroaster's is the creation of one man and one age. The prophet of Iran establishes a new religion. In the pre-Gathic religion the trend of religious thought struggles from the complex to the simple, from concrete to abstract, and is yet the farthest removed from the ideal stage. Zoroastrianism, on the other hand, as preached in the Gathas is the very embodiment of the simple and the abstract. It is the realization [xxxii] of the ideal. It is the form to which the coming generations have to conform. Deviation from it means a fall, a degeneration of the religious life. This second period I have termed Gathic.

Decay soon begins in the language in which Zoroaster composed his immortal hymns, and his successors now write in the Avestan dialect, which replaces the Gathic. The Avestan language remains the written language of the Zoroastrians from now onward to probably the last days of the Parthians, when the Pahlavi language becomes the court language of the Sasanians and supersedes the Avestan. The most extensive literature on Zoroastrianism is written in Avestan. This period, which I have called Later Avestan period, extends to the early part of the Pahlavi era and goes even beyond it. When the two periods thus

overlap each other, it often becomes difficult to determine whether a certain phase of religious thought is on one side or the other of the dividing line between them. The Avestan works, in the form in which they were written in the Avestan period, no longer exist. They were scattered by the storm that swept over Persia when Alexander conquered the country, and shook her religious edifice to its base. The form in which the Avestan texts have reached us is that which was given them during the Pahlavi period. The artists employed to restore the broken edifice belong to the Pahlavi period, but the materials used come down from the Avestan sources.

The Pahlavi period ranks fourth in the arrangement of the present work, and it covers a period of about eight centuries. Although it is most productive under the Sasanian rule, it does not close with the collapse of this, the last of the Zoroastrian empires, but survives it by at least three centuries in Moslem Persia. Though Pahlavi had replaced Avestan, the early works written in the ancient language had not yet ceased to influence the Pahlavi writers. In fact, some of the most important of the Pahlavi works are either versions of some Avestan works now lost to us, or draw their thought from the Avestan sources. Thus, the Pahlavi *Bundahishn* is the epitome of the Avestan *Damdad* [*Damdad*] *Nask*, which is subsequently lost. Similarly, not a few of the Pahlavi works written two or three centuries after the conquest of Persia by the Arabs tenaciously preserve the tradition handed down by Sasanian Persia. These are characterized by two layers of thought, one traditional, and the other representing new [xxxiii] thought current during the writer's times. The *Menuk-i Khrat*, for example, betrays Moslem influence when it preaches fatalism, but is otherwise faithfully voicing the sentiments of the orthodox Sasanian Church. This interweaving of old ideas with the new ones, and the interpolations and additions of the later writers in the works of earlier generations, often make it hopeless to disentangle the complications and distinguish between the opinions and ideas of different periods.

Thirteen hundred years have elapsed since the dissolution of the last of the Zoroastrian empires. Henceforth we have to record the religious history of the Zoroastrian remnants in Persia and the Zoroastrian settlers of India. Zoroastrianism sinks with the Zoroastrian power, and a long period of obscurity follows. I have named it a period of decadence.

Under the aegis of the British rule in India Zoroastrianism emerges once again with the prosperity of the Parsi community. I have hailed this as the period of the revival of Zoroastrianism.

These various periods, which represent chronologically different stages of the historical development of the religious thought of

Iran, from remote antiquity down to the immediate present, will, I hope, give the reader a general and comprehensive view of the history of Zoroastrian religion. As the subjects are treated piecemeal in different periods according to the natural growth of ideas from period to period, the reader will have to read crosswise when he needs a complete account of any particular concept. For example, if he wants to know all that the Zoroastrian literature has to say about Ormazd [Ohrmazd], he will get it as a whole not from any one period, but from all. The detailed list of contents and the index will help him in his inquiry.

Transliteration of the technical terms. I have sought to preserve the changes that these have undergone during successive periods, and have variously transliterated them in the treatment of the different periods, according as they represent the Avestan, Pahlavi, or Persian pronunciations. Thus, for example, Ahura Mazda of the Gathic and Avestan periods become Ormazd [Ohrmazd] in the Pahlavi period. Angra Mainyu assumes the form Ahriman in the subsequent periods. The Avestan Vohu Manah changes into Pahlavi Vohuman and into Bahman in Persian. In the frequent use of the name of the prophet, I have, however, not scrupulously followed this method. I have distinguished between the Avestan, [xxxiv] Pahlavi, and Persian forms by writing Zarathushtra for the first, and Zaratust for Pahlavi and Zartusht [Zartosht] for Persian as they actually occur in these languages; but I have adopted the more familiar form Zoroaster for general use. Similarly, I have called the religion of the prophet Zoroastrianism. With a view to simplicity for the general reader, I have avoided, as far as it has been practicable, the free use of diacritical marks, and have employed simple transcriptions of the names of the heavenly beings persons, and books when they occur in the text.

* * * * *

I am grateful to Dr. Charles J. Ogden who has carefully revised the greater part of the proofsheets and favoured me with his scholarly criticism.

[1]

PRE-GATHIC PERIOD

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO ABOUT 1000 B.C.

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[3]

HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM

Notes:

CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES

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

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

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

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

1. HN. 30. 2. 1.

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

3. [Dk., vol 9](#), p. 577.

4. Diodorus, 17.72; Curtius, 5.7; [Dk., vol.9](#), p. 569.

5. [Dk., vol. 9](#), p. 569.

6. [DK8, 1, 7](#).

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

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

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

The Pahlavi, Pazend, and Persian sources. During the chaos that prevailed in Iran after the downfall of the Achaemenian empire, the Avestan language began to decay. When it grew unintelligible to the people, the learned priests undertook translations and explanations of the Avestan texts into Pahlavi, [5] the new language which originated during the period. These commentaries on the original Avestan texts are called *âzainti* in Avesta, and *zand* in Pahlavi. The explanatory texts now came to be known as Avastak-u Zand or the Avesta and the commentaries. Pahlavi was the court language of the Sasanians and it survived the downfall of their empire by at least three centuries. Extensive Pahlavi literature that came into existence under the Sasanians has mostly perished. The works that have reached us were written after the downfall of the Sasanian empire, mostly during the Abbasid period. The compilation of the most important work of the period, the *Dinkard [Denkard]*, for example, was commenced by the learned high-priest Atarfarnbag Farokhzad in the beginning of the ninth century and completed by one of his successors, Adarbad Hemed, towards the end of the ninth century. The *Dinkard [Denkard]*, *Vijirkard-i Dinik*, and the *Persian Rivayets* give us summaries of the lost Nasks. We gather from the [contents of the lost Nasks](#) given in the *Dinkard [Denkard]* that, with the exception of the eleventh Nask, altogether twenty Avestan Nasks, nineteen along with their Pahlavi commentaries and one without it, still existed in the ninth century. The greater part of these works has perished during the unsettled times when Persia fell under the barbarous rule of the Tartars. Pahlavi works on religious subjects that are extant consist of about 446,000 words.¹⁰

With the invention of the modern Persian alphabet, Pahlavi fell into the background. An admixture of Aryan and Semitic make-up the Pahlavi language as written. It was later simplified by the elimination of all Semitic words and replacing them with their

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

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

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

Iranian equivalents. The original Avestan texts were explained and interpreted by the Pahlavi commentary which, as we saw, was called Zand. A further need was felt to make explanatory versions of the Pahlavi texts themselves. This further explanation and added commentary is called *Pazand* from the Avestan word *paiti zainti*. Short benedictory prayers are composed in Pazend [Pazand] as supplementary prayers to the original Avestan prayers, The Pazend [Pazand] texts were written in Avestan script. With the introduction of the Arabic script in Persia, the Pahlavi script fell into disuse.

Zoroastrian works came to be written in the modern Persian [6] alphabet. A considerable literature, both in prose and poetry, has sprung up during the last seven centuries in Persian on Zoroastrian subjects.¹¹ The Pahlavi and Pazend [Pazand] works originated in Persia, whereas both Persia and India contributed in the production of the Persian works.

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

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

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

Oriental sources. The Indo-Iranians shared a common religious heritage, and the Rig Veda furnishes us with the earliest sacred texts that are helpful in the better understanding of the religious beliefs of the pre-Gathic, Gathic, and the Younger Avestan periods of the history of Zoroastrianism. There are, likewise, scattered passages in the Vedas, Brahmanas, Smriti, and Puranas that refer to the Iranians and their religion. Judaism under the Exile was influenced by Zoroastrian teachings and furnishes us with points of resemblance between the angelology, demonology, and eschatology of the Iranians and the Hebrews. The Armenian historians Moses of Khoren and Elisaeus, the theologians Eznik and the Syrian Theodore bar Khoni, the Acts and Passions of Persian Saints and Martyrs, works written by Zoroastrian converts to Christianity, the Syriac, Armenian, Judaic, and Christian polemic literature against Zoroastrianism, and the writings of the Mandaeans are full of views held by those who opposed the state religion of Persia during the Sasanian period. A host of Arabic and Mohammedan Persian writers from the days of Ibn Khurdadbah (A.D 816) and al-Baladhuri (A.D.

851), al-Biruni (A.D. 973-1048), al-Shahrastani (A.D. 1086-1153), to Yakut (A.D. 1250), Kazwini (A.D. 1263), Mirkhond (A.D. 1432-1498) and Mohsan Fani (A.D. 1600-1670) give valuable [7] information on our subject. There are stray passages in Chinese literature with reference to the religious beliefs and practices of the Zoroastrians.

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

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

[8]

CHAPTER II

AIRYANA-VAEJAH

The Stem-land of the Aryans. The problem of the cradle of the Aryan race will probably never be solved with certainty. Airyana-vaejah, 'the stem-land of the Aryans,' is spoken of as the

1. [Vd. 1.3.](#)

2. [Vd. 2.9-19.](#)

first of the good lands created by Ahura Mazda.¹ It had a mild and genial climate, with long, pleasant summers and short winters. Unlike Indian Yama, who chose the realm of the dead and established his suzerainty in the heavenly world, Yima was the illustrious king who ruled over men and beasts and converted his kingdom into a veritable paradise upon earth. Animals and mankind prospered and grew in such large numbers in his memorable reign, which tradition has subsequently regarded as the Golden Age of Iran, that the country could no longer hold them. Ahura Mazda, thereupon, bade him to lead his overflowing population to migrate southwards, on the way of the sun. Yima carried out the divine behest and yet the difficulty was not solved, for the numbers kept on increasing steadily. The king organized a second migration again towards the south and still a third in the same direction.² Moreover, the happy home of the Aryans was destined to be further disturbed, Ahura Mazda knew this through his omniscience and he called a conference of the angels and summoned Yima to attend it with the best of his men.³ He then warned the king that Angra Mainyu, the enemy of God and men, contemplated invasion of Airyana-vaejah. He would cause evil winter to fall that would bring fierce, deadly frost. Such dense desolation would follow the icy deluge that every vestige of human habitation would disappear and it would be a wonder if even a footprint of a sheep could be seen.⁴ Angra Mainyu did invade the happy home of the Aryans and plagued it with a deluge of snow and ice. Forewarned by Ahura Mazda, the mighty king took timely measures, and before Angra Mainyu [9] cause destruction and death, through deadly deluge, or, in the language of geology, before the glacial cataclysm rendered the primeval Aryan home unfit for habitation, he led a further successful migration towards the hospitable south.

3. [Vd. 2.21.](#)

4. [Vd. 2.22-24.](#)

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

Pressure of growing population, thirst for adventure, sharp divisions caused by the fermentation going on in the minds of thinking persons over religious beliefs and practices continued to disintegrate them. During the early part of the second millennium B.C., nomad tribes left their home and turned westwards and reached the Aegean lands or turned southwards in successive waves from the steppes of the Caspian Sea. Scattered tribes passed by the chain of Caucasus, entered Armenia and spread southwards. Some of the more virile tribes succeeded in founding small Aryan kingdoms. They have left traces of their Aryan beliefs and practices. The Kassites, who rose to power in the Zagros in 1700 B.C., designated godhead by the Indo-European

term *bugash*, Av. *baga*, Skt. *bhaga*, Slav. *bogu*, Phrygian, *bagaios*, and worshipped Suryash, Skt. *surya*, the sun, as their chief god. The Mitannis, who founded an Aryan empire between the Euphrates and the Tigris, have left behind them the record of their own names, such as Dushratta, Artatama, and the names of the Aryan divinities Mitra, Indra, Varuna, and Nasatya in an inscription dating 14th century B.C. at Boghaz-Keui. The trend of migration continued until we see the Aryan Medes at a later date facing the Semitic Assyrians as their immediate neighbours.

The Indo-Iranians. The other migratory wave extended earlier towards the Elburz [Alburz] range and to the southern belt of the Caspian an Sea and took the eastward course. The *Vendidad* opens the enumeration of the sixteen good places created by Ahura Mazda, ranging between Airyana-vaejah in the north and Hapta Hindu or Sapta Sindhu, the land of seven (later five) rivers, the Panjaub.⁵ The names of these lands may not be taken as marking [10] the successive stages of the Aryan migration showing the people leaving their original habitat, descending downwards through the Caucasus, crossing the Elburz [Alburz] range, entering eastern Iran or modern Afghanistan, passing the Hindukush and terminating their peregrinations in Sapta Sindhu. But the test may be taken as recording historico-geographical reminiscence on the part of the writers of the south-eastward migration of the Aryan race.

5. [Vd1.1-20.](#)

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

The great Aryan family thus dispersed during several generations and the members sought out for themselves new settlements in Asia and Europe. Of the various groups that separated from the main stock at different times, the Iranian group preserved most faithfully the original name of the primeval home of the Aryans. The place of residence had changed, the surroundings had altered beyond recognition, and the communities that lived and shared life with them had gone. But the deeply cherished name Airyana-vaejah had been indelibly imprinted on their minds. The veneration for the stem-land lived, the memory of its paradisaic condition still lingered, the auspicious name Airyana-vaejah continued still to be passionately loved, and the Iranians resolved that their latest settlement should be known for ever by no other name than Airyana vaejah of happy memory.

[11]

THE GATHIC PERIOD

ABOUT 1000 B.C.

[12 is blank]

[13]

Notes:

CHAPTER III

ZARATHUSHTRA

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

Zarathushtra resolves to be his own teacher, and to learn by observation and thinking. He thinks and thinks deeply and comprehensively on the conditions prevailing around him. He considers that life is not woven of the tissues of joy and happiness alone, but of considerable sorrow and misery also.

Injustice and inequity, strife and oppression, poverty and destitution, greed [14] and avarice, wrath and rapine, falsehood and deceit, envy and malice, hatred and jealousy, crime and vice, sorrow and suffering, filth and disease confront him everywhere. He is keenly responsive to human sufferings and the groans and sighs of the agonized hearts. The misery of the multitude touches his heart. His flesh creeps, his heart is heavily oppressed, and his spirit is depressed at the sight of this dark side of human life. He suffers at the sight of suffering and, with eyes suffused with tears, he lives from day unto day thinking and brooding over the woes of the world. Zarathushtra doubts the goodness of gods.

He is religious at heart, but his daily experience of the religion practised and lived around him tends to estrange him from the faith of his forefathers. He sees with horror temples reeking with the blood of sacrificial animals. He finds that barren formalism, sanctimonious scrupulosity, meticulous ablutions, superstitious fear, and display of external holiness pass for religion. Zarathushtra doubts the religion of his birth.

Zarathushtra seeks silent, solitary seclusion. Solitude is nature's sublime temple where spirit can commune with spirit in the surrounding silence and unruffled calm. Mountains lift their heads majestically on the Iranian plateau, and Zarathushtra retreated into the mountain fastness. Here, far removed from the stress and strife of life, and with no human sound to distract his thoughts, he made his home. He breathed the refreshing air. The twittering and chirping and whistling and singing of birds filled the air. Here the earth and waters, birds and beasts, sun and moon, stars and planets worked as his teachers. He read some lesson, some message written by the hand of the maker of all on every pebble and every leaf, every dewdrop and every sunbeam, in every star and every planet. Here he plunged into a reverie or gazed into vacancy. The calm atmosphere is conducive to communion, and here, in the monastic void; he communed with nature which inspired solemn thoughts in him. He communed with his mind and he communed with his inner self. He thought and he reasoned, he cogitated and he contemplated, he mused and he dreamed. He meditated upon the essence of divinity, the anomalies of life, and the human destiny after death. Here in this great and glorious temple of nature, built by divine hands, his eyes of spirit saw what the eyes of flesh could not see. Here in the sublime sanctuary spoke the solemn voice of [15] the divine vicar and he heard it. Zarathushtra's creative mind evolved the highest conception of godhead, whom he named Ahura Mazda or the Wise Lord.

Zarathushtra yearns to see Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra has prepared himself through the wise discipline of mind and heart and through the life of piety to receive his message from Mazda. He longs for the moment when, being enlightened in mind, he

10. [Y28.3](#); [43.8](#).

shall visualize Vohu Manah or Good Mind, Asha or Righteousness, Sraosha, the embodiment of Obedience to divine commandments, and the sublime seat of beneficent Ahura.¹ Mind alone can understand and realize the supreme mind and Zarathushtra longs to approach Mazda through Vohu Manah.² Mind is the repository both of knowledge upon which rests the enlightenment of life, and pure thoughts which form the basis of good conduct. He developed this dual aspect of mind to a prominent degree and prayed that Vohu Manah might bless him with his presence.³ He had not long to wait, for Vohu Manah, he who impersonates the divine mind, one day came to him and inquired who he was and to whom he belonged and what he wished for.⁴ Seeing Vohu Manah, Zarathushtra got a glimpse of Ahura Mazda, whom he now conceived as holy, and for the first time felt himself acquainted with the words of wisdom.⁵ When his ardent desire to meet Vohu Manah is fulfilled he now aspires through him to greet Ahura Mazda himself.⁶ His one consuming passion now is to see Mazda face to face and hold communion with him,⁷ so that he may have the most comprehensive understanding of the divinity. He desires and yearns and prays that Mazda may vouchsafe unto him his heart's longing. Devotion for Mazda wells up in his heart, and he is filled with the divine spirit. He feels himself lifted above the earth, and in his supreme moments of transcendent ecstasy he has the beatific vision of Mazda.⁶ He has now found Mazda and he pours out his devout heart at his feet. He longs to be alone with him, belong wholly to him, and live in his love and attachment.⁹ He praises him, worships him, makes songs of devotion to him, he yearns to weave his personality with Mazda like the warp and woof, and he longs [16] to lose himself in the divine bosom.¹⁰ His whole life is bound up in one idea: Ahura Mazda.

Zarathushtra longs to commune with Ahura Mazda.

Zarathushtra has thought out many problems of life but he is still unsatisfied with his discoveries. He has doubts on many points,¹¹ and who but Mazda can solve them satisfactorily? He asks Mazda for whom has he created the weal-dispensing cattle,¹² who has marked out the path of the sun and the stars, by whom does the moon wax and wane,¹³ who has yoked swiftness to winds and clouds, who withholds the earth and the sky from falling down, who made the waters and the trees,¹⁴ what artificer made light and darkness and wakefulness and sleep, who made the dawn and the day and the night that remind man of the intelligence of his duty,¹⁵ who is the creator of Good Mind,¹⁶ who formed the blessed devotion in the divine kingdom and who with wisdom made the son dutiful to his father,¹⁷ how should devotion embrace those to whom his religion is proclaimed,¹⁸ whether devotion furthered righteousness through deeds,¹⁹ how was the prayer to be addressed to him,²⁰ who was righteous and who was wicked, with whom did the enemy of all side and who was like unto him, was not the person that repudiated Mazda's

- 11. [Y48.9.](#)
- 12. [Y44.6.](#)
- 13. [Y44.3.](#)
- 14. [Y44.4.](#)
- 15. [Y44.5.](#)
- 16. [Y44.4.](#)
- 17. [Y44.7.](#)
- 18. [Y44.11.](#)
- 19. [Y44.6.](#)
- 20. [Y44.1.](#)
- 21. [Y44.12.](#)

beneficence himself the enemy,²¹ how was the wickedness of those who ran counter to the rules of righteousness and good thought to be put down,²² how was wickedness to be brought into the hands of righteousness,²³ who would gain victory when the powers of righteousness and wickedness came to grips,²⁴ who would smite victoriously the enemy with the mighty words of Mazda,²⁵ how would recompense to the righteous and retribution to the wicked be accorded at the reckoning,²⁶ how the best existence was to be won,²⁷ would the divine kingdom be made known to God's faithful through Good Mind,²⁸ what were the ordinances of Mazda,²⁹ how should he, Zarathushtra, approach Mazda with love,³⁰ with what goodness would his soul win felicity,³¹ and many such questions pertaining to the way of life. He felt Mazda's inspiring [17] presence within him, he heard his whispers. Mazda spoke through his mind and he was enlightened. He sought instruction from Mazda and had now acquired it.³²

22. [Y44.13.](#)

23. [Y44.14.](#)

24. [Y44.15.](#)

25. [Y44.16.](#)

26. [Y31.14.](#)

27. [Y44.2.](#)

28. [Y44.6.](#)

29. [Y34.12.](#)

30. [Y44.17.](#)

31. [Y44.8.](#)

32. [Y45.6.](#)

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

33. [Y29.8.](#)

34. [Y43.11.](#)

35. [Y28.4.](#); 50.11.

36. [Y44.10.](#)

37. [Y31.3.](#)

mankind.³⁶ He looks forward to winning all living men for the faith of Ahura Mazda.³⁷

But the ardent desire of the prophet was not to be fulfilled [18] at the moment, nor to be accomplished in full measure in after ages. Though possessed of all the best elements that fitted it to be a world creed, Zoroastrianism has never shown any signs of becoming a universal religion. In the midst of the vicissitudes of fortune, it has been a national religion at best. Little short of a miracle has saved it from total extinction, and various causes have combined to reduce it to the narrowest limits today as the communal religion of a hundred and twenty-five thousand souls. This fact will be brought out more prominently in the treatment of the religious development during the subsequent periods.

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

Zarathushtra definitely breaks with the religion of his forefathers. Zarathushtra has seen by this time that there were some people who were anxious to hear what he had to say. He now began to give lengthy talks on subjects of great importance to his eager listeners. He saw that he could sway and draw the [19] hearts of his hearers to himself. He gave forth publicly that he came from his maker Ahura Mazda, whom he declared to be incomparably greater than the gods they had so far known. This great God had sent him as his chosen prophet to preach a nobler religion than the one they followed. Their priests had laid great

emphasis on outward observances and carried rules for rituals to meticulous casuistry. Their gods were fond of sacrificial offerings of animals and birds. Religion, preached Zathushtra, did not consist in a scrupulous observance of outward forms, but was based mainly upon the heart. A broken heart and a contrite spirit were the choicest sacrifices that the faithful could offer to their creator. Burning tears of a penitent heart were better than a cupful of oblations. The aim and object and end of the religion that Mazda had commissioned him to teach was righteous conduct. His worship was founded on righteousness. Genuine piety is of the heart and its outward expressions are good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The beliefs and practices of his hearers were irreconcilably alien from what he taught. His outspoken utterances created diverse effects upon those who flocked to hear him daily. Some felt themselves moved and influenced by them.

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

The hostile Daevayasnian priests. The priests of the ancient faith were now alarmed. They attempted to dissuade the prophet from disturbing the peace of the people. They met often to argue with him on the questions he was raising, but were foiled in the controversies.³⁸ They felt themselves humiliated before the people and gave up meeting the prophet. They began to work against him and tried in all possible manners to frustrate the effect he was daily producing upon his hearers. They were accustomed to fatten upon the profits of the elaborate ceremonials [20] and rich sacrifices that people offered under their guidance. They were renowned as exorcists who cast out demons, who read dreams, prognosticated the future, warded off the effect of the evil eye and, with ingenious charlatanism, had prospered among the credulous and superstitious. Zarathushtra reproved their greed and avarice. He exhorted the people to give up these superstitious practices and warned them that they were causing great harm by following such false teachers.³⁹ His denunciation of their practices made them furious and now they sought his ruin. They accused him of preaching doctrines that were subversive of the religion of their forefathers and the established form of worship, and of blaspheming their gods. They incited the people to oppose him and made frantic appeals to the rulers of the land to drive him out from their midst.

Zarathushtra's heart was burning with indignation against these

38. [Y30.6.](#)

39. [Y45.1.](#)

40. RV. 2. 23. 1; 3.14.1.

hypocrisies. With his holy spirit aglow with righteous wrath, he called these Pharisees and Scribes of Iran, Kavis and Karapans or seemingly blind and hearingly deaf. These terms belong to the Indo-Iranian period and were evidently used in a good sense, before the Aryan groups separated. They share the fate of the cardinal word *daeva* and are assigned derogatory meaning in the Gathas. The Vedic hymns use the word *kavi* in the sense of a sage. It is freely applied to the seers and to Soma priests. It is further used as an epithet of gods. Agni, in particular, bears this honoured title.⁴⁰ In the Gathas the word is curiously used with a double meaning. It is given a bad connotation whenever it is applied to the priests of the Daeva-worshippers. But the second Iranian dynasty is known as the Kavi or Kianian [Kayanian]. Its renowned kings who lived before the coming of Zarathushtra were Kavi Kavata, Kavi Usa, and Kavi Haosrava. Even Vishtaspa, who later became the royal patron of the new religion, retains this title and Zarathushtra speaks of him as Kavi Vishtaspa.⁴¹ It is significant, however, that Vishtaspa is the last king who shares this epithet with his royal predecessors. The kings who succeed him and with whom the dynasty dies out do not share the title. To the class of the Kavi belong the Karapan, corresponding to Skt. *kalpa*, 'ritual,' and the Usij, Skt. *ushijah*.

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

These evil teachers, complains Zarathushtra, misinterpret the doctrines that he preaches and deceive people.⁵¹ They are devoid of goodness of mind and heart and are the beloved of the Daevas.⁵² They defraud mankind of the happiness of both the worlds.⁵³ Like the Daevas whom they follow, they are known throughout the seven regions of the earth as the offspring of Evil Thought, Lie, and Arrogance.⁵⁴ They persecute the righteous and

41. [Y46.14](#); [51.16](#); [53.2](#).

42. [Y44.20](#).

43. [Y32.15](#).

44. [Y31.20](#); [46.11](#); [51.14](#).

45. [Y48.10](#).

46. [Y49.1, 2](#).

47. [Y32.14](#).

48. [Y32.12](#).

49. [Y32.13](#).

50. [Y44.20](#).

51. [Y32.9](#).

52. [Y32.4](#).

53. [Y32.5](#).

54. [Y32.3](#).

55. [Y32.10, 11](#).

desolate their pastures.⁵⁵ Those who strengthen the hands of such false leaders given over to wickedness incur Ahura's displeasure.⁵⁶ Zarathushtra exhorts all not to listen to the words and commands of the liars who bring misery and destruction to the house and clan, district and country, but to resist them with all their might.⁵⁷ These persons who do not embrace Righteousness and Good Thought are Zarathushtra's enemies. They are [22] powerful and they strive to frighten Zarathushtra who is weak.⁵⁸ He looks to Ahura Mazda for protection against them and prays that instead of causing him harm, their hostile actions may recoil upon themselves.⁵⁹ The enmity and hatred towards the prophet, however, increase day by day and he is now aware that the opponents are bent upon doing him the utmost harm that they can, that is, they conspire to kill him.⁶⁰

56. [Y31.15.](#)

57. [Y31.18.](#)

58. [Y34.8.](#)

59. [Y46.7, 8.](#)

60. [Y51.10.](#)

The Kavis and Karapans carried on vehement counter propaganda against Zarathushtra. They persuaded, denounced, cajoled, flattered, and threatened in one breath those that showed signs of being influenced by the new doctrines. They terrorized them with excommunication from society, and with persecution in this life and tortures awaiting them in the next life. People dreaded their power and were not yet swayed so completely by the new teachings as to face persecution. The history of religions teaches us that a new religion does not spread through well-balanced and reasoned arguments and convictions. It is borne on the wings of the unbounded enthusiasm and overflowing emotion that a prophet can create. If a prophet succeeds in preaching the new ideas that fill his being, with passionate and frantic zeal, if he succeeds in kindling the flame of emotional, nervous enthusiasm among his hearers by his fervent preaching, if he succeeds by means of his whirlwind campaign to light the spark that can set the whole country on fire, his religion becomes a living faith. Zarathushtra's teachings had not so effectively stirred them. Consequently, those that followed him hanging with enthusiasm on the unheard of words that he uttered, gave up going after him when they saw the vehement opposition of the custodians of the old faith. Those that had seriously heard him but were yet undecided and hesitating in the choice between the charms of the new and the dictates of the old religion, deserted him. The ignorant and unthinking people, who had, with child-like curiosity, turned wherever his footsteps trod, imitated the elders of society and left him. Those who were proud to claim him as their friend forsook him when the hour came for them to stand by him. Those that were his kith and kin disowned him, because he had disavowed their ancestral faith. Thus did the wavering, timid, half-hearted followers fail him in his hour of need and leave him. Ahura Mazda alone did not leave him and, [23] with him on his side, Zarathushtra felt that he was not alone in his loneliness. His prestige, however, is shattered and all restraint is broken. Respect for him is gone. He is now greeted everywhere with hostile feelings and coarse jokes. The mob that

was hilarious in his commendation becomes furious in his condemnation. It mocks and maligns, jeers and insults him.

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

Friendless and forlorn, Zarathushtra flees to Ahura Mazda.

He implores him, he cries unto him to help him as a friend would help his friend. He has no following, no means of sustenance, and no place of refuge. If he wants to live so that he can yet hope to work as the prophet of Mazda and found his excellent religion, he should leave his homeland. He asks Mazda to point him the land to which he should flee.⁶¹ When all hopes seem to be blighted, he bids farewell with heavy heart to the place of his birth. He does not know to what land he should turn and he turns to wherever Mazda may take him. He walks and walking thinks, dreams, falls into a reverie, stops, wakes up, hastens his steps. He comes across villages, but rumours have preceded him that a man, a pretender, a blasphemer, a disturber of peace is on the way. No headman of the villages comes forward to offer him an asylum in his village, even though the traditional usage of hospitality demands that his doors be flung open to the weary traveller. He must go onward, he sees, and travels to places removed from his native town, so that the people may not know him. There, among new surroundings and new people, he must begin his work anew. In his own town they knew him from childhood. They could not realize that they had among them one who had risen through the incomparable virtues of his head and heart to perfection, and upon whom Ahura Mazda's grace had descended. They could not reconcile themselves to the idea that they should bend their heads and bow their knees to one who grew of age among them and whose father and father's [24] A father lived and shared their common lives. But in the distant parts of the country where he would go as a stranger, he hoped his mission would bear fruit. So he went along from one village to another and, with feet swollen with fatigue, he covered several miles every day. Since he left his home he had not slept in a bed. If he reached a caravanserai at night, he slept in a corner where horses and mules, donkeys and camels jostled together. He rested his weary head upon the divine bosom and found a perfect haven in the heart of Ahura Mazda. At noon he slept on the bare floor or on a mattress or on straw under the shade of trees. If he found a throng of people at a halting stage passing their time in idle talk, he ventured to address them on the subject near to his heart. His words fell upon deaf ears and they curtly dismissed him from their lively company. Thus passed days after days, and season

61. [Y46.1. 2.](#)

after season. Summer and autumn had passed and he was now in the midst of severe winter. He had dined so far on extremely frugal meals and spent money where he could not do without spending it, yet his pocket was getting thinner day by day. He would have to work to earn his honest living or beg, which he would not do. He clothed himself in coarse cloth which exposed him to the bleak blasts of snow and frost that cut his face and pierced his body limb from limb. When the great nobles of his native town and the rich members of the Kavi fraternity fared sumptuously on savoury dishes and luscious wines, and slept on warm beds with velvety cushions to rest their heads and with printed chintz curtains, the one greater than they went hungry and cold and had nowhere to lay his weary limbs.

Zarathushtra's teachings win the ear of the royal court. Thus passed a long period of trials and hardships. Zarathushtra traversed the length and breadth of Iran. He spoke, he discoursed, he conversed, he preached wherever he happened to be. His prophetic career was now bearing some good result. He was winning converts for his new religion. He triumphed in gaining over the sympathy even of some intelligent youths of his own family.⁶² His cousin Maidyoimaongha sympathized with his cause and soon became his ardent disciple.⁶³ Two very brilliant brothers of the powerful Hvogva clan came over to his [25] faith. They were Frashaoshtra and Jamaspa.⁶⁴ Zarathushtra beseeches Ahura Mazda to grant the gift of Good Thought to Frashaoshtra and his other followers.⁶⁵ He implores him further bestow the most gladsome chieftainship in righteousness upon Frashaoshtra,⁶⁶ whose daughter he later takes to wife.⁶⁷ Jamaspa, called the wise, owing to his great talents. occupied the most influential position at the royal court. Zarathushtra gave him his daughter Pouruchisti in marriage.⁶⁸ The prophet of Iran had made his spiritual conquest even among the Turanians. the traditional foes of Iran, and brought over the influential chieftain Fryana and his family to his faith.⁶⁹

Zarathushtra had begun his prophetic propaganda in the west of Iran. He had now crossed the entire breadth of the country and was now in the extreme east. Bactria was the seat of the Kavi kings. For a long time he had been preaching in the great city, which was the meeting place of travellers and merchants from distant lands. He stirred up religious enthusiasm among his hearers. He spoke with flaming enthusiasm and animation and his discourses warmed their imaginations and enthused their hearts. They thought that the new teacher taught as man had never taught. They bowed their knees to him. strewed his path with flowers and worshipped the very ground he walked on. Success now attended upon him and day after day he found himself surrounded by new converts. His victory was complete when ultimately he triumphed in winning as a convert Kavi Vishtaspa, the ruler of the land, together with his royal consort

62. [Y51.19.](#)

64. [Y46.16, 17;](#) [49.9;](#) [51.18;](#) [53.2.](#)

65. [Y28.8.](#)

66. [Y49.8.](#)

67. [Y51.17.](#)

68. [Y53.2, 3.](#)

69. [Y46.12.](#)

70. [Y46.14.](#)

71. [Y28.7.](#)

72. [Y51.16.](#)

73. [Y53.2.](#)

74. [Y46.12.](#)

Hutaosa. This was the crowning event in the establishment of Zoroastrianism. Conversions to the new religion followed rapidly as a natural sequel, when it became known that the ruling house of Iran had embraced Zarathushtra's faith. Zarathushtra now declares with supreme satisfaction to his divine teacher Ahura Mazda that the king had befriended his religion and was eager to cooperate with him in his great mission of proclaiming his faith to all.⁷⁰ He now beseeches Ahura Mazda to give him and the royal patron of his religion the blessings and gifts of good [26] thought, righteousness, and devotion of Vohu Manah, Asha, and Armaiti, so that they may make his profitable words heard everywhere.⁷¹ The king, says Zarathushtra, has attained the knowledge of the sacred lore which Ahura Mazda had conceived with Asha.⁷² Vishtaspa, Frashaoshtra, and others who have now turned Zoroastrian, invoke and adore Ahura Mazda and tread the straight paths of the Saviour ordained by him.⁷³ The Turanian chieftain Fryana came over to the new faith and Zarathushtra immortalizes his clan in his holy hymns.⁷⁴

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

[27]

Notes:

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS MONOTHEISM

Gods in evolution. Religion has formed a deeply integral part of mankind at all times. We glean from the records of early peoples the earliest gropings of the human mind in its endeavour to understand and interpret natural phenomena. At various stages of its evolution, religion rises from animism to a belief in cosmic and abstract gods. Each tribe had its local god or gods who gained or lost in power as the seats of their location rose or fell in political power. The fate of the gods fluctuated with the vicissitudes of their followers. The god who rose to power either absorbed other gods in his person or subordinated them as lesser gods or ministering angels in his own service. Some of these

gods were embraced in the family of the great god as his son or consort, in case of a goddess, and formed a divine triad of father, mother, and son. When religious ideas approached abstract thinking, they were represented as the manifestations of the newly enthroned god or they were reduced to abstractions as the great god's attributes. When Babylon rose to power, its god Marduk absorbed all other gods, both of the north and the south, even his father Ea, and became the chief god of the whole of Babylonia. The legends of the earlier gods clung to his name and hymns formerly composed in their honour were now dedicated to him. Ashur, the local god of Assyria, eclipsed gods of other localities and rose to preeminence as his native city came to paramount power. When Shamash outshone his many confederate solar gods, he became the supreme god, and the other gods who were formerly on a footing of equality with him were accommodated as his satellites. Sometimes when the fighting tribes were united by peace the rival gods of each tribe formed their divine union. For example, the sun god Ra who came to Egypt from Asia formed an alliance with the popular god Amen and the dual divinities, thereafter, came to be known as Amen Ra.

[28] The priests associated the highest attributes with the gods whom they exalted. The poet who sang the glory of his favourite god was always so deeply moved by his devotion to him that he spoke and sang of him as the most powerful and the most beautiful god. Consequently, a monotheistic vein began to appear in the utterances of sectarians, each of whom acclaimed his respective god as the one and the only god, without his like. This indiscriminate exaltation of several gods as the all-highest and all-wisest evoked protest from some quarters. Human experience had taught them that a country had only one sovereign autocrat as its ruler and two or more kings of absolutely equal grade in power were unthinkable. With such ideas we notice Amenhetep IV, an adventurous king, attempting to introduce a great religious reform among his people in the fourteenth century B.C. He scoffed at the Egyptian pantheon and declared that there was only one god whose outward form was the sun. This god was Aten, the visible disk of the sun. In his zeal for reform, he changed his own name to Akhenaten or 'pleasing to the Sun-disk.' He suppressed the worship of other gods, destroyed their statues, demolished the temples that housed them, sequestered their property and obliterated their names wherever they appeared. He consecrated temples to Aten and made the cult of the Sun-disk his state religion and commanded his subjects to offer their devotions to this one God only. Being himself a poetic genius, he composed fine hymns to the new God and addressed him as the inscrutable creator, one God, absolute in power. The revolutionary reform, however, did not survive the death of the poet-king. The old gods returned from exile and were soon reinstated.

The gods were in most cases subject to human infirmities. Ra grew old with age and became weak. Gods had their wives, who like women in human society were subordinated to their lords. But as history records instances of some women of exceptional talents and virtue who broke the social barriers raised by men against their sex and rose to pre-eminence, so some goddesses of abnormal energy rose to power. The great goddess Ishtar, for instance, absorbed all other goddesses of the Babylonian-Assyrian pantheon and became the supreme female divinity. It was at her temple that sacred prostitution became a feature. Osiris had Horus for his son by his wife Isis. His brother Set overpowered and killed him by cunning and intrigue. [29] Some gods were ceremoniously bathed and clothed, adorned and perfumed with incense by priests every morning. The divine toilet over, they were treated with sumptuous food and drink of slaughtered animals and wine. The gods of the Greeks lived on the summit of Mount Olympus. They were, like the members of their divine fraternity elsewhere, invested with magnified human forms and traits. They loved and hated, intrigued and deceived and shared human frailties. It was for the demoralizing influence of such beliefs that Plato later forbade the tales of the frail gods in his ideal Republic, and Xenophanes poured out scorn over the anthropomorphic gods of Homer and Hesiod.

The gods were generally the personifications of nature. The solar gods, from their high position in the heavens, naturally became the overseers of men's actions upon earth and consequently they came to be regarded as the celestial judges. The solar gods Anu, Ninib, Nergal, and Shamash, at various periods of their ascendancy to power, became the judges who punished wrongdoers. With the advancement of thought, the moral tone improved. The heart is the voice of God and welfare in life is gained by following its guidance, says Amenhetep. The emphasis that he lays on the adherence to truth in his inscriptions anticipates Darius the Great by several centuries. But the one god who rose to the greatest moral grandeur before the incomparably more sublime god that Zarathushtra discovered, was Varuna. A god of the sky in his origin, he rose to great ethical heights and became the upholder and guardian of the moral order upon earth. He is called omniscient and infallible. He detected man's truth and falsehood. If two men sat together and schemed some wrong, Varuna was there as the third. The winkings of man's eyes were numbered by him. The sinner laid bare his heart before him, confessed his sins, and prayed for his forgiveness, pathetically saying that he did not commit sin willingly but that he was led astray by wrath, dice, and liquor. The hymns composed in his honour are most ethical.

[30]

CHAPTER V

AHURA MAZDA

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

Zarathushtra uses the divine name variously as the metrical composition of the hymns requires. He employs the combinations Ahura Mazda and Mazda Ahura or the forms Ahura or Mazda respectively, designating God in all cases. In many instances the [31] terms Ahura and Mazda are used separately in a single strophe, the one at the opening and the other at the close with different exhortations and prayers to each, yet in both cases as applied to the Supreme Being. Ahura Mazda.

Ahura Mazda is the Being par excellence. Ahura Mazda sits at the apex among the celestial beings of Garonmana [Garothman, *i.e.* Heaven]. He is not begotten, nor is there one like unto him. Beyond him, apart from him, and without him nothing exists. He is the supreme being through whom everything exists. He is brighter than the brightest of creation, higher than the highest heavens, older than the oldest in the universe. He is the best one.² He knows no elder, he has no equal. There is none to dispute his supremacy and contest his place. Nor is there one to struggle successfully with him for the mastery of the heavens. He is the first and foremost. He is the most perfect being. He is almighty.³

1. [Y31.1.](#)

2. [Y28.8.](#)

3. [Y28.5;](#) [33.11.](#)

4. [Y28.7;](#) [43.1.](#)

5. [Y48.3.](#)

6. [Y45.10.](#)

7. [Y31.7.](#)

8. [Y43.4.](#)

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

The nature of Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda is spirit in his being. The cardinal attribute Spirit or Beneficent Spirit or Most Beneficent Spirit is his very essence. Zarathushtra acquaints mankind for the first time in the history of religions with the concept of the godhead that is most incomparable in sublimity and unprecedented in the grandeur of nobility. He is higher than the highest being worshipped by mankind before his day. He [32] is devoid of all anthropomorphic traits which characterized the Aryan and Semitic gods. Man, however, can comprehend abstract ideas and spiritual conceptions when they are put before him in words and expressions clothed in the garb of earthly imagery and compassed in human language. Zarathushtra, therefore, speaks of Ahura Mazda in human analogy. He conceives of Ahura Mazda in thought and apprehends him with his eye.¹⁴ He asks him to teach by the word of his mouth¹⁵ and to tell him with the very tongue of his mouth.¹⁶ He is also spoken of as distributing good and evil to men by his own hands,¹⁷ and as observing with his eyes all things hidden and open.¹⁸ He lives in the empyrean enthroned in his majesty.¹⁹ He is ever present in the straight paths that lead mankind to righteousness.²⁰ In his resplendence he lives in the heavenly realms and wears the firmament as his garment.²¹ Yahweh, likewise, covers himself with light as with a garment. Expressions like these are symbolical and they are not to be taken literally, since Ahura Mazda, as the whole tone of the Gathas proves, is to be seen or conceived only through the mind's eye. The finite can describe the infinite through finite analogies and similes alone.

The transcendental immanence of Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda has his celestial mansions in the highest heavens, upon the vast expanse of the earth and in the hearts of the righteous persons. He is transcendent in as much as he is infinitely more sublime and greater than his creatures. Yet he is not so remote and ineffable as not to be approached and addressed and greeted by his ardent worshippers. He is immanent in the sense that man can enter into close and loving relations with him, and own him as his father and brother and friend.²² He befriends those who seek his friendship and loves those who long for his love.²³

9. [Y44.15.](#)

10. [Y46.9.](#)

11. [Y29.10.](#)

12. [Y28.3.](#)

13. [Y45.6.](#)

14. [Y31.8;](#) [45.8.](#)

15. [Y28.11.](#)

16. [Y31.3.](#)

17. [Y43.4.](#)

18. [Y31.13.](#)

19. [Y28.5;](#) [46.16.](#)

20. [Y33.5;](#) [43.3.](#)

21. [Y30.5.](#)

22. [Y45.11.](#)

23. [Y44.17.](#)

24. [Y44.1.](#)

25. [Y46.2.](#) [7.](#)

26. [Y34.7.](#)

27. [Y34.1.](#)

Zarathushtra addresses Ahura Mazda as his friend.²⁴ He is life's safest anchorage and Zarathushtra, in his misfortunes, pours out his heart in his divine friend's bosom and cries unto him for help and protection as a friend helps a friend.²⁵ He [33] lovingly helps those who flee unto him in their distress and betake themselves to his protection. There is none other than he who shields men against harm and they invoke his protection through Asha.²⁶ We sleep secure because he guards us lovingly and we live in safety because he stands by our side when we awake out of sleep. His goodness towards us knows no bounds. Immortality, holiness, power, and perfection are his gifts to those who deserve them through their deeds and words and prayers.²⁷ Man can become his friend and companion through his words and deeds of righteousness.²⁸ He is invoked to bestow upon the pious the good things of life for his love of them.²⁹ With his good understanding, man can imitate him and be like unto him by promoting the welfare of all around him through righteousness.³⁰

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

Ahura Mazda is the creator. Creation is a free act of the divine goodness of Ahura Mazda.⁴⁰ In the beginning when he lived in his supreme self-sufficiency, he conceived the thought to clothe the heavenly realm with light.⁴¹ He created light, and darkness was there, for darkness shadows light.⁴² He is the father and creator of Vohu Manah,⁴³ of Asha,⁴⁴ of Khshathra,⁴⁵ of Armaiti,⁴⁶ of Haurvatat and Ameretat,⁴⁷ and of Geush [34] Tashan.⁴⁸ The joy-giving cattle and this universe are his creations.⁴⁹ He upholds the earth and firmament from falling.⁵⁰ He made the moon wax and wane, and determined the path of the sun and stars.⁵¹ He yoked swiftness to wind and clouds.⁵² He clothed the heavenly realms with light.⁵³ He it was who made morning and noon and night.⁵⁴ He created kine, waters and plants.⁵⁵ He created human beings and their spirits, breathed life in their bodies and endowed them with the freedom of will.⁵⁶ He inspired love between the son and father.⁵⁷ He made sleep and wakefulness.⁵⁸ He is the beneficent dispenser of blessings to

28. [Y31.21, 22.](#)

29. [Y33.10.](#)

30. [Y31.16.](#)

31. [Y33.6.](#)

32. [Y28.2.](#)

33. [Y50.9.](#)

34. [Y50.8.](#)

35. [Y50.11.](#)

36. [Y50.10.](#)

37. [Y33.12.](#)

38. [Y33.7; 49.1.](#)

39. [Y44.16.](#)

40. [Y44.7.](#)

41. [Y31.7.](#)

42. [Y44.5.](#)

43. [Y31.8; 44.4; 45.4.](#)

44. [Y31.7, 8; 44.3; 47.2.](#)

45. [Y44.7.](#)

46. [Y31.9; 44.7; 45.4.](#)

47. [Y51.7.](#)

48. [Y31.9; 47.3.](#)

49. [Y44.6; 50.11.](#)

50. [Y44.4.](#)

mankind.⁵⁹ Weal and woe are ordained by him.⁶⁰

- 51. [Y44.3.](#)
- 52. [Y44.4.](#)
- 53. [Y31.7.](#)
- 54. [Y44.5.](#)
- 55. [Y44.4;](#) [48.6;](#) [51.7.](#)
- 56. [Y31.11;](#) [46.6.](#)
- 57. [Y44.7.](#)
- 58. [Y44.5.](#)
- 59. [Y28.5;](#) [33.11;](#) [48.3.](#)
- 60. [Y45.9.](#)

Ahura Mazda is the lord of wisdom. The very name of the godhead embodies in itself great wisdom. Ahura Mazda is the wise lord.⁶¹ He has created the universe through his wisdom and rules it through wisdom. He is the most knowing one.⁶² He is the far-seeing one,⁶³ and so is he the all-seeing one.⁶⁴ He knows all that is done in the past and all that will be done in the future, and judges through his omniscience.⁶⁵ Zarathushtra seeks knowledge from him of what will be and what will not be.⁶⁶ Through his Best Mind he knows man's desert at the reckoning.⁶⁷ Human beings have their masks drawn on their faces and none can see what is hidden within. But Ahura Mazda has an eye over them all and with penetrating eyes he sees their open and secret faults.⁶⁸ None can deceive his wisdom,⁶⁹ for he is undeceivable.⁷⁰ He is the consummate teacher of those who believingly hear him and become of one mind with him and who, inspired by Asha and Vohu Manah, exalt him by their words and deeds.⁷¹

- 61. [Y29.6;](#) [45.3;](#) [48.2. 3.](#)
- 62. [Y46.19.](#)
- 63. [Y33.13.](#)
- 64. [Y45.4.](#)
- 65. [Y29.4.](#)
- 66. [Y31.5.](#)
- 67. [Y32.6. 7.](#)
- 68. [Y31.13.](#)
- 69. [Y43.6.](#)
- 70. [Y45.4.](#)
- 71. [Y51.3.](#)

Ahura Mazda is the law-giver and judge. With the creation of man Ahura Mazda has ordained laws for the rightful conduct of his life.⁷² The great mission of the prophet is to acquaint [35] mankind with these and to lead all to see for themselves with their intelligence that their welfare depends on the faithful adherence to them. He exhorts his hearers to give a careful hearing to his words, understand with clear discernment what he tells them, and, with the discreet exercise of the freedom of the will, with which Ahura Mazda has endowed them, make their own choice of conduct.⁷³ The divine law-giver has established the moral order in the beginning of the world.⁷⁴ He has ordained the commandments of reward and retribution to the righteous and the wicked, and Zarathushtra asks his followers to keep them in

- 72. [Y46.15;](#) [51.19.](#)
- 73. [Y30.2.](#)
- 74. [Y46.6.](#)
- 75. [Y30.11;](#) [45.7;](#) [51.6.](#)
- 76. [Y31.14.](#)
- 77. [Y29.4;](#) [31.8.](#)
- 78. [Y43.4. 5.](#)
- 79. [Y30.10;](#) [48.7;](#) [49.10.](#)

mind and live lawful lives so that they may thereby win felicity for themselves.⁷⁵ Every man and every woman that lives this earthly life will have to stand at the reckoning one day to receive his or her own desert, and Zarathushtra teaches them all the laws of the requitals of human conduct in which Ahura Mazda himself has instructed him.⁷⁶ Ahura Mazda is the lord who knows and watches and judges the deeds of mortals.⁷⁷ He holds the destinies of mankind in his hands and apportions reward and retribution unto the righteous and the wicked.⁷⁸ The righteous souls will live in the abode of Ahura Mazda.⁷⁹ He punishes the wrong-doers just as he rewards the righteous, but he shows compassion also and forgives when the penitent sinner casts himself on his mercy.⁸⁰

80. [Y30.2.](#)

[36]

CHAPTER VI

SPENTA MAINYU

Spenta Mainyu is the self-revealing activity of Ahura Mazda.

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

Spenta Mainyu symbolizes the ideal or perfect existence as conceived in thought by Ahura Mazda. The materialization of the divine thought in creation spells imperfection and Spenta Mainyu is shadowed by his inseparable opposite. These two primeval spirits, who are spoken of as twins, emerged from the divine bosom and by their innate choice appeared as the better and the bad in thought, word, and deed.¹ He, the Most Holy Spirit, chose righteousness and he who is called the Evil Spirit [37] wooed the worst as his sphere of action.² The better one of the two spirits told the evil one that they were by nature opposed to each other

1. [Y30.3.](#)

2. [Y30.5.](#)

3. [Y45.2.](#)

4. [Y30.4.](#)

in their thoughts and teachings, understandings and beliefs, words, and deeds, selves and souls -- in nothing could they twain ever meet.³ When the two first came together in the world, they created life and non-life and established the law of reward and retribution for mankind, that the righteous will reap at the end of existence the weal of Best Thought and the wicked the woe of the Worst Existence.⁴

The Gathas variously speak of Spenta Mainyu either as the attribute of Ahura Mazda or as his vicegerent, or as his co-worker, or as identified with him or as distinct from him. It is Spenta Mainyu that Ahura Mazda creates cattle and water and plants and all that exist.⁵ Ahura Mazda is asked to give ear to man's invocation through Spenta Mainyu,⁶ and to strength through him.⁷ Through him does Ahura Mazda give Perfection and Immortality unto the pious who live a righteous and devoted life of best thoughts, words, and deeds.⁸ Ahura Mazda is implored to teach by his own mouth, on behalf of his Spirit, how the world first came into being.⁹ It is through his Spirit that Ahura Mazda furthers his blessed realms¹⁰ He gives the best unto the righteous through Spenta Mainyu.¹¹ Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda what award will he make unto the believers and the non-believers through his Spirit.¹² Mazda will come at the final dispensation with Spenta Mainyu.¹³ Through him does one win the felicity of paradise.¹⁴ The devout seek to be acquainted with the works of Spenta Mainyu.¹⁵ The Spirit knows the attitude of the false speaker and the true speaker, the wise and the unwise as they are led by the promptings of their hearts and minds.¹⁶ Spenta Mainyu is the friend of all and he protects them through Righteousness in both the worlds from transgression.¹⁷ It is the wicked that are hurt by him.¹⁸ Spenta Mainyu or the Holy Spirit is sometimes spoken [38] of as the Good Spirit,¹⁹ or the Best Spirit,²⁰ or the Most Holy Spirit.²¹ This superlative title, the Most Holy Spirit, is sometimes applied to Ahura Mazda himself.²² It is also used for Spenta Mainyu as apart from Ahura Mazda. For example, Zarathushtra tells Ahura Mazda that he chooses his Most Holy Spirit for himself.²³ The Most Holy Spirit, the one who stands in opposition to his evil twin brother, dons the massive heavens for his garment.²⁴

5. [Y44.7](#); [47.3](#); [51.7](#).

6. [Y45.6](#).

7. [Y33.12](#).

8. [Y47.1](#).

9. [Y28.11](#).

10. [Y31.7](#).

11. [Y47.5](#).

12. [Y31.3](#); 47.6.

13. [Y43.6](#).

14. [Y43.2](#).

15. [Y28.1](#).

16. [Y31.12](#).

17. [Y44.2](#).

18. [Y47.4](#).

19. [Y45.5](#).

20. [Y33.6](#).

21. [Y47.2](#).

22. [Y33.12](#); [43.2](#); [45.5](#); [51.7](#).

23. [Y43.16](#).

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

[39]

CHAPTER VII

MAZDA'S MINISTERING ANGELS

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

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

Vohu Manah, Asha, and Khshathra are neuter nouns taken in the later Avestan as male members of the divine hierarchy and Armaiti, Haurvatat, and Ameretat are feminine names. They occur in the different Gathic stanzas individually or two or three or four or more together indefinitely. The hexad, or taken along with Ahura Mazda, the heptad, is not fixed in the Gathas as we find it in the later Avesta, where it is expressly said that the Holy Immortals are seven. Yet we have instances where Ahura Mazda and his six epithets are mentioned together.⁴ Asha stands first in

1. [Y30.9; 31.4.](#)

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

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

4. [Y34.11; 45.10](#); 47.1.

5. [Y31.22; 51.1.](#)

the number of times he is mentioned and Vohu Manah, though first of the heavenly host, comes second. They are followed by Khshathra and Armaiti respectively. Haurvatat and Ameretat, who invariably occur together, make up the rear. With the exception of Vohu Manah, whose name is always a fixed compound with Vohu, 'Good,' qualifying Manah, 'Mind,' all the others have not the stereotyped epithets that the four of them are given at the later period. At times Vohu Manah's epithet designating his goodness is transferred to Khshathra.⁵ As the process towards the personification of Ahura Mazda's attributes has already begun, it is often extremely difficult to decide whether the qualitative divine expressions stand for personified beings or as abstract nouns designating certain virtues in application to Ahura Mazda himself or to man.

The prominent feature of these six abstract attributes when they have fully grown into Ahura Mazda's ministering angels is the twofold character of work they are assigned to perform. [41] In addition to a specific virtue that each represents on the spiritual side, a material object is put under his or her direct guardianship on the physical side. This physical aspect of their functions is most marked in the later period. Its origin, however, can be traced in the Gathas where we find a beginning already made of associating some one material creation with every one of them. We shall now deal with them individually.

VOHU MANAH

The first in Ahura Mazda's creation. When Ahura Mazda was with none beside him, in his supreme isolation, he evolved in his mind the thought of creating the universe. He named his first creation after his mind and called him Vohu Manah, Good Mind.⁶ Zarathushtra fondly speaks of him as Ahura Mazda's son.⁷ He is often addressed in the Gathas in the superlative as Vahishta Manah, Best Mind.⁸ Occasionally, Vohu Manah is converted into Vohu Mainyu, Good Spirit⁹ or Vahishta Mainyu, Best Spirit.¹⁰ It has to be noted that Vohu Mainyu or Vahishta Mainyu has nothing in common with Spenta Mainyu or the Holy Spirit, the first of the two Primeval Spirits of Ahura Mazda.

Vohu Manah is Ahura Mazda's Good Thought. The ethical system of Zarathushtra has the triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds as its basis. Good words and good deeds proceed from good thoughts and good thoughts are inspired in man by Vohu Manah. In all his waking hours man thinks and thinks incessantly. He thinks useful thoughts and wise thoughts and great thoughts and wholesome thoughts and kindly thoughts and virtuous thoughts and good thoughts. But he thinks also idle thoughts and foolish thoughts and mean thoughts and malicious thoughts and cruel thoughts and vicious thoughts and evil thoughts. The mind soars high and wings its way in the realm of righteousness or it sinks low and grovels in the mire of

6. [Y44.4](#).

7. [Y31.8](#); [45.4](#).

8. [Y28.9](#); [31.4, 7](#); [32.6, 11](#); [33.9](#); [41.1](#); [50.1, 4](#); [51.4](#).

9. [Y45.5](#); [48.8](#).

10. [Y33.6](#).

wickedness. Man thinks thoughts, but thoughts make man. Thoughts make him a human being, a saint, and an angel; and thoughts [42] make him an animal, a sinner, and a demon. Man is thought materialized in word and deed. Vohu Manah is the ideal that man as a thinking being has to realize.

Vohu Manah symbolizes Ahura Mazda's wisdom. Man thinks but he reasons besides, and his reasoning raises him above the level of the animal world. The Gathas employ *khra*tu and *chisti* to designate wisdom. They do not, however, classify wisdom as the later Avesta distinguishes the innate wisdom from the acquired wisdom. The loftiest ideal for man upon earth is to be like unto Ahura Mazda and it is through the wisdom of Vohu Manah that man can realize it.¹¹ Zarathushtra invokes Ahura Mazda to grant him the wisdom of Vohu Manah,¹² and longs to be acquainted with the decrees of Vohu Manah.¹³ He desires to know to whom among his followers will the wisdom of Vohu Manah descend.¹⁴ The wise man of good understanding performs deeds that are pleasing to Vohu Manah.¹⁵ The enlightenment that Vohu Manah gives enables the devout to practise the doctrines of weal and woe.¹⁶ They pray for thoughts to turn where wisdom abides.¹⁷ Mazda is implored to fulfil the desires of the wise who are devoted to Vohu Manah¹⁸

Vohu Manah's grace. Zarathushtra adores Vohu Manah with songs of praise,¹⁹ and teaches his followers to offer him praise.²⁰ He asks Ahura Mazda to teach him how best he could inspire men to the deeds of Vohu Manah.²¹ He tells his heavenly father that he will always work for the furtherance of the domain of Vohu Manah,²² and adds that as long as he has strength left in him he will, in union with Vohu Manah, lead mankind on the path of righteousness.²³ He implores Ahura Mazda to come down to him through Vohu Manah.²⁴ Through Vohu Manah does the prophet long to reach Ahura Mazda,²⁵ and through the performance of the deeds pleasing unto Vohu Manah does he long to glorify and reach his maker.²⁶ Pouruchisti is advised to seek Vohu Manah's fellowship.²⁷ The devout seek to propitiate Vohu Manah to win his kinship.²⁸ Ahura Mazda is besought by them to be the revealer of Vohu Manah [43] unto them.²⁹ When enlightenment descends upon Zarathushtra, he longs to see Vohu Manah,³⁰ and prays that he may come to help him.³¹ His yearning to have a glimpse of the divine mind is satisfied. Vohu Manah comes to him and illumines his mind.³² The prophet seeks to know from him the rules of life that lead to happiness.³³ Vohu Manah teaches him the working of Ahura Mazda.³⁴ He asks Mazda to teach him through Vohu Manah his secret doctrines.³⁵

11. [Y48.3.](#)

12. [Y28.1.](#)

13. [Y48.9.](#)

14. [Y48.11.](#)

15. [Y34.10.](#)

16. [Y34.7.](#)

17. [Y30.9.](#)

18. [Y28.10.](#)

19. [Y28.3.](#)

20. [Y30.1.](#)

21. [Y48.8.](#)

22. [Y28.11.](#)

23. [Y28.4.](#)

24. [Y28.6.](#)

25. [Y28.2.](#)

26. [Y50.9, 10.](#)

27. [Y53.3.](#)

28. [Y45.9.](#)

29. [Y31.17.](#)

30. [Y28.5.](#)

31. [Y28.3.](#)

32. [Y43.7, 9, 11, 13, 15.](#)

33. [Y44.8.](#)

34. [Y45.6.](#)

Life led according to the promptings of Vohu Manah is life lived well and Zarathushtra prays for the life, of Good Mind.³⁶ The blessings of Vohu Manah form the precious reward for man and are gained through the performance of good deeds inspired by righteousness.³⁷ Zarathushtra longs to know through Vohu Manah the straight paths of life.³⁸ There are the paths of Vohu Manah and Mazda is invoked to reveal them,³⁹ Ahura Mazda grants the prayer and speaks about the paths of Vohu Manah to Zarathushtra.⁴⁰ Wicked persons mislead men who strive to live an upright life and follow the paths of Vohu Manah.⁴¹ The prophet warns his followers against the evil teachers who keep them back from appreciating the worth of acquisition of Vohu Manah.⁴² The evil-minded Bendva defies the counsel of Vohu Manah.⁴³ The faithful are eager to learn how they could keep far from those that do not seek Vohu Manah's counsel.⁴⁴ The evil doers are separated from Vohu Manah.⁴⁵ Vohu Manah leaves those who do not practise righteousness,⁴⁶ and righteousness flees from those who follow not Vohu Manah, in the same manner as noxious creatures fly from men,⁴⁷ The pious therefore declare that they will not annoy Vohu Manah.⁴⁸ Vohu Manah is dispenser of the riches of the well disciplined mind and Zarathushtra longs to win it through righteousness.⁴⁹ The pious invoke Mazda to reward their efforts to lead righteous lives by bestowing upon them the riches of Vohu Manah.⁵⁰ It is the [44] teachers of evil that prevent men from valuing these riches.⁵¹ The prophet prays for the gifts of Vohu Manah for himself and his associates.⁵² Vohu Manah's reward is an incomparable blessing.⁵³ Ahura Mazda is asked to grant the wishes of those who are worthy of Vohu Manah's reward owing to their righteousness.⁵⁴ Those that are good unto men who endeavour to lead righteous lives will share the blessings of Vohu Manah.⁵⁵ They are religious in truth who embrace the good thoughts of Vohu Manah and base their actions of life upon them; such persons win prosperity and happiness.⁵⁶ The prophet prays for chieftainship through Vohu Manah.⁵⁷ Man obtains power through goodness of his mind and he invokes Ahura Mazda to grant him that power through Vohu Manah.⁵⁸ Zarathushtra asks Vohu Manah to bestow power upon his disciples.⁵⁹ Girt with such power, man can wage a successful war against wickedness, therefore do the votaries beseech Vohu Manah to endow them with it.⁶⁰ Mazda gives power unto the righteous as reward through Vohu Manah.⁶¹ He is invoked to give endurance and durability through Vohu Manah.⁶² These he gives and in addition he bequeaths upon the good, perfection and immortality.⁶³ Those who in obedience to the teachings of the prophet do the deeds of Vohu Manah are given good abodes and joy in life,⁶⁴ and perfection and immortality.⁶⁵ Whoso befriends Mazda through thoughts and deeds will be given steadfastness of Vohu Manah.⁶⁶ Vohu Manah

35. [Y50.6.](#)

36. [Y43.1.](#)

37. [Y28.7;](#) [Y43.16.](#)

38. [Y33.6.](#)

39. [Y34.12.](#)

40. [Y34.13.](#)

41. [Y32.11.](#)

42. [Y32.9.](#)

43. [Y49.2.](#)

44. [Y44.13.](#)

45. [Y32.4.](#)

46. [Y34.8.](#)

47. [Y34.9.](#)

48. [Y28.9.](#)

49. [Y46.2.](#)

50. [Y43.2.](#)

51. [Y32.9.](#)

52. [Y28.8.](#)

53. [Y33.13.](#)

54. [Y28.10.](#)

55. [Y33.3.](#)

56. [Y49.5.](#)

57. [Y49.3.](#)

58. [Y33.5, 12;](#) [Y44.6;](#) [Y51.21.](#)

59. [Y29.10.](#)

60. [Y31.4.](#)

61. [Y46.10.](#)

62. [Y51.7.](#)

63. [Y45.10.](#)

64. [Y29.10.](#)

65. [Y45.5.](#)

66. [Y31.21.](#)

67. [Y34.5.](#)

68. [Y32.6.](#)

69. [Y31.5.](#)

70. [Y34.11.](#)

71. [Y43.6.](#)

72. [Y34.14.](#)

73. [Y50.11.](#)

74. [Y46.18.](#)

75. [Y47.2.](#)

76. [Y31.6.](#)

77. [Y46.13.](#)

78. [Y46.12.](#)

79. [Y44.6.](#)

80. [Y30.8.](#)

81. [Y46.3.](#)

protects the poor.⁶⁷ Through him does Ahura Mazda know the deserts of mankind.⁶⁸ Zarathushtra asks Mazda to let him know the award he will give him through Vohu Manah.⁶⁹ Those in whose life righteousness and devotion are blended, further the dominion of Vohu Manah.⁷⁰ The righteous bring prosperity to the World through the deeds of Vohu Manah.⁷¹ Mazda awards his bounty to those who through deeds of Vohu Manah work for the world.⁷² He promotes the [45] best wishes of the truthful workers through Vohu Manah.⁷³ The prophet promises to give through Vohu Manah the best that is in his power to those who rejoice him by their goodness.⁷⁴ One acquires the best of the Holy Spirit through the words of Vohu Manah and the devotion of Armaiti.⁷⁵ Vohu Manah furthers the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.⁷⁶ He prospers the possessions of those that rejoice Zarathushtra.⁷⁷ He welcomes the Turanian Fryans to the joy of Mazda.⁷⁸ Vohu Manah will announce the advent of the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.⁷⁹ He will establish it at the end of time for those who have helped righteousness to rout wickedness.⁸⁰ He will come to the help of the Saoshyants at the Renovation.⁸¹

Vohu Manah's relation to paradise. This becomes most marked in the later period. The beginning towards this phase is already to be noted in the Gathas. Vahishta Manah or Best Thought is spoken of as the paradise itself where the righteous will go after death.⁸² Vohu Manah dwells in the heavenly home along with Mazda and Asha.⁸³ Paradise is said to be the heritage of Vohu Manah.⁸⁴ Zarathushtra knows the rewards of deeds done for Ahura Mazda and desires to lead his soul to paradise through Vohu Manah.⁸⁵ Those who oppose the evil deeds of the wicked who are wilfully blind and deaf to the teachings of the prophet, will go to the heavenly abode of Vohu Manah.⁸⁶ The mighty power of Vohu Manah will be manifested when Mazda will deal out justice to the righteous, and the wicked through his fire.⁸⁷ Through the words of Vohu Manah the prophet honours those who have worked for the divine purpose and whom Mazda will therefore gather in his abode.⁸⁸ The pious pray for long life of felicity in the paradisiac domain of Vohu Manah.⁸⁹

Vohu Manah in association with cattle. Vohu Manah's connection with animal life is hinted in the Gathas. This trait becomes much emphasized in the later period when he becomes the genius of cattle and takes the animal world under his protection, [46] as a secondary part of his function as the premier angel of Ahura Mazda. When Geush Urvan, as the genius of the sentient beings, living upon earth, complains of the wrath and rapine to which the animal kingdom is subjected, Vohu Manah consoles her with the gladsome news that the creator of the world was sending Zarathushtra, his messenger, to teach mankind to protect the cattle and kine.⁹⁰ In consultation with Vohu Manah, it is said, Ahura Mazda created cattle and pastures to feed them.⁹¹ Vohu Manah is the protector of cattle.⁹² They are a precious asset

82. [Y30.4.](#)

83. [Y30.10; Y44.9.](#)

84. [Y53.4.](#)

85. [Y28.4.](#)

86. [Y32.15.](#)

87. [Y43.4.](#)

88. [Y46.14.](#)

89. [Y33.5.](#)

90. [Y29.7, 8.](#)

91. [Y47.3.](#)

92. [Y50.1.](#)

93. [Y48.6.](#)

94. [Y45.9.](#)

of Vohu Manah and give durability and endurance to mankind.⁹³
It is through the good understanding of Vohu Manah, that men
are inspired to work for cattle.⁹⁴

ASHA

The Indo-Iranians recognize a universal order prevailing in the world. Life upon the earth reveals to man that a smooth and graceful and ordered movement goes on all around him in nature. Spring and summer, autumn and winter, with their ceaseless seasonal succession of changes, take their unvarying course. The tides rise and fan punctually. The dawn and morn and noon and evening and night go their uninterrupted daily round. The dying day gives birth to the night The night hangs its myriad of silvery lamps to lighten the darkness. The dawn breaks to resurrect the day and the day goes the perennial round of its birth. The heavens and their glittering hosts, the sun and the moon and the stars and the planets march at a regulated space. Despite the casual freaks and caprices, the laws governing the movements of nature seem to be immutable. This unfailing regularity of nature led the Indo-Iranians to discern the fact that a stable order prevailed in the universe which ensured its existence. They called it *rta*. They emulated this universal order and introduced it in all their human activities. They offered prayers to gods, they sacrificed to them seasonal offerings. All this was to be done at fixed times, reciting specific formulas, chanted in a prescribed manner and with regulated movements of sacred implements. The ceremonials were thus to be per [47] formed in accordance with the established rules and under a fixed order. This order was *rta* in rituals or rite, a word derived from the same stem. Thus step by step they advanced higher and saw that human life can best be lived when man's relations with his neighbours, his duty towards his fellowmen and towards the heavenly beings were regulated according to fixed laws. Thus they came to recognition of a basic moral order regulating human affairs and understood by *rta* employed in ethical matters as right or righteousness, word, of the same significance. Varuna, Mitra, and the Adityas, as also Agni and Soma, came to be regarded as the upholders of the moral order.

Zarathushtra adopts Asha, the variant of *rta*. A cardinal figures most prominently in the Gathas is *Asha*. Its familiar and widely known Iranian variant is *arta*, *areta*, equivalent to the Vedic *rta*. Words derived from this stem must been freely used in Western Asia and surrounding countries about four thousand years ago. We gather from the clay bearing cuneiform inscriptions discovered at Tell-el-Amarna in Middle Egypt and the great find of tablets at Boghaz-Keui in Asia Minor that Dushratta, a Mitanni king, was ruling in Syria about 1600 B.C. In his letter to his brother-in-law Amenhetep III of Egypt he

mentions his brothers who bear the names Artashumara and Artatama. His grandfather also was named Artatama. Zarathushtra thus finds the stem *arta* or *areta* in vogue, but we do not find him using it in the Gathas. He uses its variant *asha* instead and makes it the basic foundation for the structure of his moral philosophy. The Later Avestan works follow him in their general use of the word. It is in the [Old Persian inscriptions](#), however, that we find the use of *arta* as an element of proper names. The Pahlavi writers make a more frequent use of the *arta* form than of *asha*.

Asha stands for Ahura Mazda's righteousness. Ahura Mazda is the father of Asha, says Zarathushtra.⁹⁵ He created Asha through his wisdom.⁹⁶ Asha is of one will with Ahura Mazda⁹⁷ He is the counsellor of Ahura Mazda,⁹⁸ and lives in one abode with Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah.⁹⁹ He is given the attribute *Vahishta*, 'best'.¹⁰⁰ It is not employed in the Gathas [48] as his fixed title, as it becomes in the later Avesta where Asha Vahishta is used as a compound word.

95. [Y44.3](#); [Y47.2](#).

96. [Y31.7.8](#).

97. [Y28.8](#), [29.7](#).

98. [Y46.17](#).

99. [Y44.9](#).

100. [Y28.8](#).

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

101. [Y44.3](#).

102. [Y44.4](#).

103. [Y44.5](#).

104. [Y50.10](#).

105. [Y32.2](#).

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

106. [Y33.6](#).

107. [Y34.3](#).

108. [Y51.22](#).

109. [Y34.3](#).

Zarathushtra best exemplifies Asha's righteousness in his life. Zarathushtra is pure in body, mind, and spirit. He is the embodiment of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. He thinks, speaks, and acts righteousness. He lives in the atmosphere of righteousness and radiates it all around him. He is the very righteousness itself living in flesh for the good of mankind. Righteousness sustains him in his hardships and trials. When his

110. [Y28.6](#).

great prophetic work is beset with untold difficulties; when the prophet of Ahura faces opposition on all sides; when friends desert his company and kinsmen abandon his cause; when the rulers of the land look upon him with suspicion and the wicked seek to compass his ruin; when, friendless and forsaken, hissed and hooted, ridiculed and persecuted, he roams about the villages [49] and towns of Iran, he turns his eager eyes to Mazda and Asha in search of inward peace, and obtains it.¹¹⁰ Reduced to the verge of the direst poverty, Zarathushtra does not seek earthly riches, but the imperishable wealth of the spirit, that is, righteousness.

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

Zarathushtra longs to see Asha. Zarathushtra yearns to make Asha his own along with Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah.¹¹¹ He longs to see Asha and his heavenly associates.¹¹² He is eager to behold him coming with the devotion of Armaiti.¹¹³ Through the deeds prompted by the good thoughts of Vohu Manah he aspires to reach Asha.¹¹⁴ He implores Asha to come unto him along with Ahura Mazda and Vohu Manah.¹¹⁵ He advises his daughter Pouruchisti to seek fellowship with Asha.¹¹⁶ He prays that Hvogva may make Asha her own.¹¹⁷ He longs for the day when Asha will come among the Fryan nobility through Armaiti.¹¹⁸ He counsels marrying couples that as husbands and wives they should strive to excel one another in their pursuit of Asha.¹¹⁹ Asha is approached through the practice of noble deeds according to the primeval laws ordained by Ahura [50] Mazda.¹²⁰ Zarathushtra looks for devotion to come with Asha among his followers.¹²¹ Those who live in communion with Asha reap the best reward.¹²² Zarathushtra prays for the blessings of Asha.¹²³ Asha is asked to grant that blessing which forms the reward of Vohu Manah.¹²⁴ Zarathushtra, says Ahura Mazda, is the one man who has heard the divine commandments and undertaken to live

- 111. [Y28.3.](#)
- 112. [Y28.5.](#)
- 113. [Y43.10.](#)
- 114. [Y50.9.](#)
- 115. [Y33.7.](#)
- 116. [Y53.3.](#)
- 117. [Y51.17.](#)
- 118. [Y46.12.](#)
- 119. [Y53.5.](#)
- 120. [Y46.15.](#)
- 121. [Y48.11.](#)
- 122. [Y49.9.](#)
- 123. [Y51.10.](#)
- 124. [Y28.7.](#)
- 125. [Y29.8.](#)
- 126. [Y28.4.](#)
- 127. [Y32.6.](#)
- 128. [Y28.11.](#)
- 129. [Y48.8.](#)
- 130. [Y31.22.](#)
- 131. [Y31.16.](#)
- 132. [Y33.3.](#)

and work for the furtherance of Asha's righteousness.¹²⁵ The prophet of Ahura Mazda declares that as long as he shall have vigour and strength he will urge all to yearn for Asha,¹²⁶ and work for the spread of Asha's precepts.¹²⁷ He adds further that he shall protect Asha's righteousness all his life.¹²⁸ The pious everywhere welcome Asha's manifestation,¹²⁹ and the wise uphold him through their words and deeds.¹³⁰ Whoso spreads Asha's righteousness in the house and district is like unto Ahura Mazda.¹³¹ Those that are best unto the righteous ones shall be in the pastures of Asha and Vohu Manah.¹³²

Asha's work. Zarathushtra knows Ahura Mazda through Asha.¹³³ He prays for the good deeds of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of Vohu Manah.¹³⁴ He asks Ahura Mazda to give help through Asha,¹³⁵ and beseeches him to grant the desires of those who are devoted to Asha.¹³⁶ Ahura Mazda gives riches of Vohu Manah through Asha,¹³⁷ and Zarathushtra seeks to learn how the riches can be obtained.¹³⁸ Those who put down violence and strife gain Vohu Manah's reward through Asha.¹³⁹ He is implored to come through Asha and Vohu Manah,¹⁴⁰ and asked to give mighty power through Asha.¹⁴¹ Those who practise righteousness win power as reward from Ahura Mazda through Vohu Manah.¹⁴² Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda what reward will be given him through Asha and Vohu Manah.¹⁴³ These rewards are the blessings of both worlds given by Ahura Mazda through Asha.¹⁴⁴ Zarathushtra asks Asha together with Vohu Manah about the rules of life that lead to happiness.¹⁴⁵ Ahura Mazda sees open and secret faults of men through [51] Asha.¹⁴⁶ Kinship with Vohu Manah is sought through Asha.¹⁴⁷ Ahura Mazda wields power between the rival factions of righteousness and wickedness through Asha.¹⁴⁸ Through Asha and Vohu Manah Ahura Mazda apportions vigour and durability, weal and immortality unto those who practise righteousness and good thinking.¹⁴⁹ Through Asha's righteousness does the world prosper by deeds prompted by Vohu Manah's good thoughts.¹⁵⁰ Through Asha again is Ahura Mazda's help sought that Vohu Manah may come.¹⁵¹ Ahura Mazda is implored to reveal knowledge of the path of Vohu Manah through Asha.¹⁵² The creator of the world confers with Asha to know about a lord who can alleviate the sufferings of the kine.¹⁵³ Zarathushtra seeks to know through Vohu Manah what Asha said to the creator.¹⁵⁴ Ahura Mazda is asked to give long life which is Asha's gift.¹⁵⁵ The pious declare that they will never provoke the wrath of Asha.¹⁵⁶

Ahura Mazda asks Zarathushtra to seek information from Asha.¹⁵⁷ Asha gives counsel to those who listen to him.¹⁵⁸ Wisdom exalts communities through Asha's righteousness.¹⁵⁹ Ahura Mazda knows what is best for man in this life through Asha.¹⁶⁰ He teaches his best doctrines through Asha.¹⁶¹ Armaiti is asked to enlighten the conscience of men through Asha.¹⁶² Men of good understanding know Armaiti's devotion as the

- 133. [Y45.8.](#)
- 134. [Y28.1.](#)
- 135. [Y28.6.](#)
- 136. [Y28.10.](#)
- 137. [Y43.2.](#)
- 138. [Y46.2.](#)
- 139. [Y48.7.](#)
- 140. [Y33.7.](#)
- 141. [Y33.12.](#)
- 142. [Y46.10.](#)
- 143. [Y31.5.](#)
- 144. [Y28.2.](#)
- 145. [Y44.8.](#)
- 146. [Y31.13.](#)
- 147. [Y45.9.](#)
- 148. [Y44.15.](#)
- 149. [Y45.10.](#)
- 150. [Y43.6.](#)
- 151. [Y44.1.](#)
- 152. [Y34.12.](#)
- 153. [Y29.2, 3, 6.](#)
- 154. [Y46.9.](#)
- 155. [Y28.6.](#)
- 156. [Y28.9.](#)
- 157. [Y43.12.](#)
- 158. [Y51.11.](#)
- 159. [Y34.14.](#)
- 160. [Y45.4.](#)
- 161. [Y48.3.](#)
- 162. [Y33.13.](#)
- 163. [Y34.10.](#)

source of Asha's righteousness.¹⁶³ Asha and Armaiti are united in the heavenly realms.¹⁶⁴ Ahura Mazda has devised his creed with Asha that Vishtaspa embraces.¹⁶⁵ Asha gives power to his zealous adherents.¹⁶⁶ He furthers men's possessions.¹⁶⁷ Men make the pastures prosper through the practice of Asha's righteousness.¹⁶⁸ The wicked strive to hinder the good work of those who further Asha's righteousness by prospering the cattle by their diligence.¹⁶⁹ Ahura Mazda created plants for the cattle.¹⁷⁰ Diligent persons gain cattle through Asha.¹⁷¹ The prophet is awarded precious animals and weal and immortality by Ahura Mazda through Asha.¹⁷²

164. [Y46.16.](#)
 165. [Y51.16.](#)
 166. [Y51.1](#)
 167. [Y33.11.](#)
 168. [Y44.20.](#)
 169. [Y46.4.](#)
 170. [Y48.6.](#)
 171. [Y51.5.](#)
 172. [Y44.18.](#)

[52] **The path of righteousness.** The Rig Veda refers to the path of *ṛta*.¹⁷³ The Gathas similarly speak of the path of Asha, righteousness, and the idea, as we shall see later, is developed in the Later Avesta. The path of righteousness leads to paradise and the wicked souls, we are told, tremble at the Bridge of Judgment because they have deviated from the path of Asha through their words and deeds.¹⁷⁴ Ahura Mazda dwells in the straight paths and Zarathushtra seeks their knowledge through Asha.¹⁷⁵

173. RV. 8.31.13.

Deviation from the path of righteousness spells man's destruction. Zarathushtra exhorts his hearers that every man and woman is free to choose for himself or herself the path of righteousness or the path of wickedness. The decision between the two ways of life rests with the individual. Man is the arbiter of his destiny. He has the power and freedom to choose between truth and falsehood, righteousness and wickedness, good and evil. He is responsible for the moral choice he makes and is consequently responsible for his actions. If he makes the right choice and embraces righteousness, he will reap its reward, but if, as a free agent, he chooses wickedness, the accountability will be his and his own daena or self will lead him to retribution.

174. [Y51.13.](#)

175. [Y33.5. 6.](#)

The discipline of the individual in righteousness. The prophet inculcates righteousness in his teachings, and strictly enjoins his followers to combat wickedness. By his birthright man belongs to the world of righteousness and is sent into this world for its furtherance and for the destruction of the world of wickedness. He is a friend of the righteous and their righteousness, but a foe of the wicked and their wickedness. It is expressly said that he alone is righteous who is a friend to the righteous; but he who, through maudlin sentimentality, is good unto the wicked and palliates his wickedness is to be considered wicked, for by failing to do his duty he puts a premium on wickedness.¹⁷⁶ To condone evil in a wicked person is a capitulation to evil. Before the individual sets out to fight wickedness in the outer world, he has first to establish order in his inner world. Concord and not discord, order and not disorder, righteousness, and not wickedness, should be his constant inward experience. With strict discipline he has to work for the spiritual development of his self. He is taught to subjugate his passions, [53] eradicate evil

176. [Y46.6.](#)

177. [Y33.5.](#)

thoughts from his mind, and conquer the animal in him by an incessant warfare with the forces of wickedness. The path of righteousness leads to the abode of Ahura Mazda.¹⁷⁷ But the path is not without its difficulties and trials. Firm resolution, strong will, and sustained effort are required before one can successfully tread it and reach the final goal. It needs no effort to be wicked and be a passive victim of the flesh, but it does take a hero to be righteous and live for the spirit. There are tempting pitfalls and alluring snares that beguile the devotee and lead him astray to the path of wickedness. The quest is fraught with great difficulties. But then the prize it brings is also matchless. The goal is not easy to reach. Many more are the chances of misses than of hits, and the aspirant has to try again and again before he can successfully strike the mark. Our attempt may prove fruitless for the time being, but there is merit in having aimed at realizing the ideal. If we win, it is good. If we lose, it is also good.

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

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

178. [Y48.5.](#)

179. [Y49.3.](#)

180. [Y31.1.](#)

181. [Y31.4.](#)

182. [Y34.9.](#)

183. [Y34.8.](#)

184. [Y44.13.](#)

185. [Y44.14.](#)

186. [Y30.8.](#)

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

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

Physical impurity is removed by fire and Zarathushtra employs this emblem of purification in the eschatological sense to burn and destroy spiritual uncleanness or sin. Thus will the fire be the great purifier of souls steeped in wickedness. Through Asha and fire will Ahura Mazda give his final award unto the good and the evil.¹⁹¹ Asha and Armaiti will help Ahura Mazda when he will separate the righteous from the wicked through his fire.¹⁹² The fire of Ahura Mazda is mighty through Asha and will bring manifest joy unto the righteous but a visible harm unto the wicked.¹⁹³ Ahura Mazda's might and holiness, says Zarathushtra, will be manifest when he will deal out the destinies unto the righteous and the wicked through the glow of fire strengthened by Asha.¹⁹⁴

187. [Y46.3.](#)

188. [Y48.1. 2.](#)

189. [Y43.9.](#)

190. [Y46.7.](#)

191. [Y31.3, 19.](#)

192. [Y47.6.](#)

193. [Y34.4.](#)

194. [Y43.4.](#)

The sovereign power of Ahura Mazda. One of the first attributes that man learns to discern in the heavenly beings is their might or power. It is manifest in their activities as creatures, sustainers, and rulers. The ancestors of the Indo-Iranians called it *kshatra*, and applied it to Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and the Adityas. Zarathushtra, we find, adopts it in its Iranian form *khshathra* and uses it in its ordinary meaning, power, or applies it specifically to divine power, symbolized in the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda. He gives it the epithet *vohu* and calls it *vohu khshathra*, 'the Good Kingdom,'¹⁹⁵ or speaks of it as *khshathra ishtoish*, 'the Kingdom of Desire,'¹⁹⁶ or names it *Khshathra vairya*, [56] 'the Wished for Kingdom.'¹⁹⁷ Ahura Mazda has created Khshathra.¹⁹⁸ In the post-Gathic period the compound Khshathra Vairya gains ground and is always used as the name of the archangel representing Ahura Mazda's divine majesty.

195. [Y31.22: 48.8.](#)

196. [Y51.2.](#)

197. [Y43.13: 51.1.](#)

198. [Y44.7.](#)

Zarathushtra exhorts mankind to work for the establishment of the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.

The creator, ruler, and sovereign lord of both the worlds is Ahura Mazda. The pious invoke him to lead them to work in his kingdom upon earth for the prosperity of men and their cattle.¹⁹⁹ They pray that they may get happy homes, rich in pastures, attended by Khshathra.²⁰⁰ All creatures prosper in Mazda's Kingdom through Vohu Manah,²⁰¹ and through him again Ahura Mazda gives Khshathra's power to the good.²⁰² Nobler than the sphere of earthly riches is Khshathra's domain of spiritual riches. Ahura Mazda rules over his earthly kingdom and prepares mankind for his celestial kingdom of perfection and goodness that is yet to be. Despite its much good, this world harbours in its midst much that is evil. Man's work in this life is to fight and rout the forces of evil. Zarathushtra had laid the foundation of the Divine Kingdom and has assigned to man the stupendous task of building and establishing the ideal kingdom in which good alone will exist. Evil lurks in man and through man bestrides the world. It is his duty to cleanse his inner nature of all impurity and eradicate evil from the world without. Zarathushtra is hopeful and confident that one day evil will not be. It is left to man to bring that day near or keep it at a distance. It is in his hands to accomplish it now or keep it long in the coming. The prophet of Ahura Mazda is in earnest and eager to hasten its advent. He asserts, with repeated emphasis, that the Kingdom is near at hand, if only mankind sets about zealously and strenuously to inaugurate it. He passionately exhorts his hearers not to waver, not to be staggered by the formidable nature of the task, but to aspire and work and struggle and fight for it with body and mind, heart and soul. With deep religious fervour he sings that he is ready to lay down the life of his body to lead mankind to work for the advancement of the Kingdom in obedience to the commandments of Ahura Mazda.²⁰³ With Ahura Mazda on his side, [57] he makes the good thoughts of Vohu Manah and righteousness of Asha his own and, with the burning devotion of Armaiti, he works for the advent of

199. [Y45.9.](#)

200. [Y48.11.](#)

201. [Y34.3.](#)

202. [Y51.21.](#)

203. [Y33.14.](#)

204. [Y28.3.](#)

205. [Y31.4.](#)

the imperishable Kingdom.²⁰⁴ Triumph of righteousness over wickedness will usher in the Kingdom and he prays for strength for himself and his followers so that they may wage a successful war against wickedness.²⁰⁵

The pious pray that they may participate in the inauguration of the Kingdom of Mazda.²⁰⁶ Vohu Manah, the guardian of good thoughts, furthers the Kingdom.²⁰⁷ As right thinking is the source of good conduct and endeavour to work for the advent of the Divine Kingdom, it is sometimes spoken of as belonging to Vohu Manah. The Kingdom, it is said, is in the possession of Vohu Manah and Ahura Mazda and Asha and Armaiti live in it.²⁰⁸ The Kingdom of Vohu Manah is furthered by Asha's righteousness.²⁰⁹ To be worthy of entering the Divine Kingdom and living in it is man's highest aspiration. Asha assures the life in the Kingdom to those who work zealously for the furtherance of righteousness.²¹⁰ Through righteousness is the divine help gained in Mazda's Kingdom.²¹¹ Zarathushtra is eager to enter the blessed Kingdom,²¹² and a long life of felicitous existence in it,²¹³ and to share its splendours.²¹⁴ Wise Jamaspa courts the life of righteousness and longs for the Kingdom as the gift of Vohu Manah.²¹⁵ Zarathushtra prays that Frashaoshtra may win the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda for all time;²¹⁶ He asks Ahura Mazda to manifest unto him the incomparable things that mankind will witness in the Divine Kingdom as the reward of Vohu Manah.²¹⁷ Ahura Mazda is asked to give the Kingdom through Vohu Manah as reward to those whom he knows to be doing what is best in life.²¹⁸

The Divine Kingdom in the world of perfection. Vohu Manah will proclaim the advent of the Kingdom.²¹⁹ Ahura Mazda has ordained through Vohu Manah and Asha to give unto the good perfection and immortality in his Kingdom.²²⁰ Through [58] Khshathra he apportions the destinies unto the good and the evil according to their deserts.²²¹ The pious yearn for the presence of Ahura Mazda with Vohu Manah, Asha, and Khshathra when they enter the paradisiacal Abode of Song.²²² Ahura Mazda will come at the final goal accompanied by his Holy Spirit, Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti.²²³ With evil eradicated and imperfection at an end, the world that will emerge on the occasion of the establishment of the Divine Kingdom will be altogether a new world, a perfect world.²²⁴

Khshathra's sphere over metals. Ahura Mazda has created the earth rich in soil and has filled its bowels with untold mineral wealth and has desired that mankind should thrive and prosper through the riches obtained by their diligence and labour. Wealth is the natural concomitant of all earthly kingdoms. All earthly and spiritual riches therefore are embodied in Khshathra. The later Avestan texts assign the guardianship of metals, the visible token of wealth, to Khshathra. The Gathas are silent over the connection of Khshathra with metals. The ordeal of molten metal

206. [Y51.2.](#)

207. [Y30.8; 31.6.](#)

208. [Y46.16.](#)

209. [Y34.11.](#)

210. [Y51.1.](#)

211. [Y43.14.](#)

212. [Y48.8.](#)

213. [Y43.13.](#)

214. [Y43.8.](#)

215. [Y51.18.](#)

216. [Y49.8.](#)

217. [Y33.13.](#)

218. [Y46.10.](#)

219. [Y44.6.](#)

220. [Y45.10.](#)

221. [Y45.7.](#)

222. [Y50.4.](#)

223. [Y43.6.](#)

224. [Y34.15.](#)

225. [Y30.7; 32.7.](#)

226. [Y51.9.](#)

does however play a prominent part in cleansing the world of all moral impurities to make way for the coming of Khshathra's Kingdom. Ahura Mazda knows best the retributions that will take place through the molten metal.²²⁵ The righteous will reap their final reward and the wicked will meet with their retribution when Ahura Mazda will judge them through the molten metal.²²⁶

ARMAITI

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

Zarathushtra's soul is wedded to Ahura Mazda through Armaiti's devotion. Through fervent meditation on his own [59] inner nature and patient study of Ahura Mazda's marvellous work in creation, Zarathushtra understands the ways of Ahura Mazda. He knows the wise lord through the enlightenment of his mind. His heart yearns to own Ahura Mazda. From the depth of his heart, he prays unto him, invokes him in silence and with the pronounced words of his mouth. He burns incense of devotion unto his maker upon the fire burning on the altar in the holy temple of his heart. The fire first flares and flickers, then blazes and burns, and illumines the sublime path that leads to Ahura Mazda. He dedicates his will and his desire and his heart and his life and himself unto him. He loses himself in devoted love for him. He sees with Ahura Mazda's eyes and hears with Ahura Mazda's ears. He communes with him and he becomes one with him. He is eager that his hearers should share the incomparable gift of Armaiti with him. With earnest longing he asks Ahura Mazda when Armaiti's devotion will ennoble the lives of those to whom he proclaims his faith.²³⁰ The members of different ranks of Iranian society that have embraced his religion fervently pray that the good and holy Armaiti may be theirs.²³¹ Those who have devoutly accepted the commandments of Ahura Mazda are eager to devote their hearts unto him.²³²

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

227. [Y44.7.](#)

228. [Y31.9.](#)

230. [Y44.11.](#)

231. [Y32.2.](#)

232. [Y31.1.](#)

233. [Y28.3.](#)

235. [Y51.21.](#)

236. [Y49.5.](#)

237. [Y33.12.](#)

238. [Y44.10.](#)

240. RV. 5.43.6.

241. [Y44.6.](#)

life of Armaiti's devotion, the wise one bases his conduct upon her inspiration.²⁴² The prophet asks Frashaoshtra to lead the faithful to the life of communion with Asha's righteousness and [60] Armaiti's devotion.²⁴³ For the union of both furthers the Kingdom of Vohu Manah²⁴⁴ The coming of Asha and Armaiti to inspire their lives is eagerly sought by the pious.²⁴⁵ Armaiti inquires after the misdeeds and shortcomings of the true speaker and the false speaker, the wise and the ignorant.²⁴⁶ The wicked Bendva, the inveterate foe of the prophet, does not follow Armaiti.²⁴⁷ Righteousness deserts those who know Armaiti as the beloved of Ahura Mazda, and yet estrange themselves from her devotion.²⁴⁸ Zarathushtra asks her to give him and Vishtaspa their heart's desire.²⁴⁹ He implores her to teach men's consciences through righteousness.²⁵⁰ She is besought to grant as a gift the riches of the life of Vohu Manah's good thoughts.²⁵¹ One serves the Most Holy Spirit the best by the performance of the deeds inspired by Armaiti's devotion.²⁵² Armaiti is invoked to send righteous sovereigns and not wicked ones to rule over the world.²⁵³ Armaiti will co-operate with Ahura Mazda at the final dispensation.²⁵⁴

242. [Y34.10.](#)

243. [Y46.16.](#)

244. [Y34.11.](#)

245. [Y43.10;](#) [48.11.](#)

246. [Y31.12.](#)

247. [Y49.2.](#)

248. [Y34.9.](#)

249. [Y28.7.](#)

250. [Y33.13.](#)

251. [Y43.1.](#)

252. [Y47.2](#)

253. [Y48.5.](#)

254. [Y47.6.](#)

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

255. [Y31.9.](#)

255a. [Y46.12.](#)

256. [Y47.3.](#)

HAURVATAT AND AMERETAT

The inseparable pair of perfection and immortality. Haurvatat and Ameretat form an indissoluble spiritual pair and are always celebrated together in the Gathas. No single hymn [61] is addressed to Haurvatat or to Ameretat alone. Haurvata means or perfection, and Ameretat is emblematic of immortality. The dual earthly gift of endurance and vigour of body is paralleled with the heavenly blessings of perfection and immortality.²⁵⁷ Ahura Mazda bestows through Vohu Manah and Asha endurance and vigour of body in this world and Haurvatat's perfection and Ameretat's immortality in the next, upon those who offer him the sacrifice of devotion²⁵⁸ The earthly boons are the gifts of

257. [Y33.8;](#) [34.11;](#) [51.7.](#)

258. [Y33.8.](#)

260. [Y31.6.](#)

261. [Y44.17.](#)

262. [Y44.18.](#)

263. [Y31.21.](#)

265. [Y47.1.](#)

sacrifice of devotion.²⁵⁸ The earthly boons are the gifts of Haurvatat and Ameretat.²⁵⁹ Whoso piously pronounces the sacred formulas dedicated to Haurvatat and Ameretat receives the best reward.²⁶⁰ Through the recital of these holy words and basing their lives upon righteousness, do the faithful win for themselves the blessings of Haurvatat and Ameretat.²⁶¹ Zarathushtra fervently prays for the participation in these blessings.²⁶² Those who offer willing obedience unto the teachings of the prophet will attain unto Haurvatat and Ameretat.²⁶³ He who befriends Ahura Mazda with his thoughts and words and deeds wins them for himself.²⁶⁴ Man comes by them in Ahura Mazda's Kingdom through his good thoughts, words, and deeds, and his life of righteousness and devotion.²⁶⁵ It is the wicked who defraud mankind of happy life and immortality by means of evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds.²⁶⁶

266. [Y32.5.](#)

Water and plants form the province of Haurvatat and Ameretat. The Gathas hint at the connection of Haurvatat and Ameretat with water and plants, over whom they preside in the Later Avesta. Ahura Mazda who has created water and plants is invoked to give Haurvatat's perfection and Ameretat's immortality.²⁶⁷ On the eschatological side Haurvatat figuratively represents ambrosia and Ameretat stands for nectar that the pious souls receive in heaven.²⁶⁸

267. [Y51.7.](#)

268. [Y34.11.](#)

SRAOSHA

Sraosha is obedience to the religious lore. In the later period, Sraosha rises to great prominence as the divine teacher [62] of Mazda's religion. Zarathushtra longs to see Sraosha",²⁶⁹ and prays that he may come unto every man whom Mazda Wills.²⁷⁰ The prophet teaches the new faith to the world of humanity. He exhorts mankind to pay heed to the words that are best for the mortals to hear and tells them that Ahura Mazda will give them perfection and immortality if they will bring Sraosha's obedience unto him.²⁷¹ By teaching mankind to obey the ordinances of Ahura Mazda, and inspiring them to work according to them, through good thoughts, words, and deeds for the furtherance of righteousness in the world, Zarathushtra helps in the inauguration of the Divine Kingdom of Ahura Mazda.²⁷² In the later period Sraosha acts as a co-assessor with Mithra and Rashnu, who all combine to make up a heavenly tribunal for the judgment of the dead. Mithra and Rashnu, the two brother judges, seated with Sraosha, do not appear in the Gathas, but a passage speaks of Sraosha's coming as a judge with the reward unto the good and evil contending parties.²⁷³ Zarathushtra invokes Sraosha as the greatest of the heavenly beings to appear at the final consummation of the world.²⁷⁴

269. [Y28.5.](#)

270. [Y44.16.](#)

271. [Y45.5.](#)

272. [Y33.14.](#)

273. [Y43.12.](#)

274. [Y33.5.](#)

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

of this abstract virtue.

ATAR

The fire cult. Atar or fire corresponds to the Vedic Agni. Atar's functions are elaborately delineated in the Later Avesta. We shall therefore leave the discussion of the resemblance between them for subsequent pages. The early Aryan settlers of Iran had brought the cult to their new home as their cherished heritage bequeathed to them by their Indo-Iranian ancestors. Tradition speaks of several great sacred Iranian fires consecrated by the pre-Zoroastrian kings. The [Pahlavi Bundahishn](#) says that Yima and Kavi Haosrava established the fires Froba and Goshasp; and that Vishtaspa, the royal patron of Zarathushtra, consecrated the fire Burzin Mihr.²⁷⁵ The Mohammedan writers of the tenth century speak of some ten such places dedicated [63] to fire before Zoroaster's time.^{275a} The prophet of Iran thus found the cult of fire already established in Iran when he entered upon his divine mission on earth. He purified its archaic form and incorporated it into his new system. Of all the elements, he raised fire, or light, to a place of the highest distinction in his faith.

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

When Vohu Manah approaches Zarathushtra, and enquires of him what is his most ardent desire, the prophet replies that his inmost yearning is to think of righteousness through the devotional gifts of his homage to Atar's fire.^{276a} When the chosen of the Lord is thwarted at times in his great mission by the Druj or Lie, he turns to Atar as one of the protectors that will best help him in the furtherance of the mighty cause of righteousness.²⁷⁷ The fire of Mazda plays an important part in the work of the last judgment at the final Renovation of the world. Mazda has promised through Asha that he will give award unto the contesting parties of good and evil through fire.²⁷⁸ The Heavenly Father will deliver his final judgment upon the righteous and the wicked through fire together with the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁹ It is through fire that the creator will bestow profit upon the righteous and bring harm unto the wicked.²⁸⁰ Mazda will apportion reward and retribution to both the good and the evil through the glow of fire,

275. [Bd.17.5-8.](#)

276. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 98-100.

276a. [Y43.9.](#)

277. [Y46.7.](#) [i.e. the famous phrase "Kem-na Mazda" etc. - JHP]

278. [Y31.3.](#)

279. [Y47.6.](#)

280. [Y51.9.](#)

281. [Y43.4.](#)

282. [Y34.4.](#)

283. [Y31.19.](#)

which is emblematic of righteousness.²⁸¹ The believers therefore pray that fire, which is mighty through righteousness, may [64] be a manifest help unto the faithful, but a veritable harm unto the foe.²⁸² The noble truth of the prophetic words of Zarathushtra will, in this manner, be vindicated when, at the final Dispensation, divine judgment shall be meted out to man through the red fire of Mazda.²⁸³

ASHI

The feminine abstraction of sanctity. Ashi represents sanctity and destiny, or reward. In one passage she is given the epithet *vanghuhi*, 'good',²⁸⁴ which in the Later Avesta is inseparably associated with her name. She represents the life of piety and its concomitant result. Zarathushtra invokes Asha to come with Ashi.²⁸⁵ She apportions Mazda's ordinances, about which the prophet desires to learn.²⁸⁶ He invokes her in his crusade against Druj, or the Lie.²⁸⁷ Whoso, through the power that Ashi confers upon him, deprives the wicked of his possessions, reaps the rewards that Mazda has promised.²⁸⁸

In an eschatological sense, she forms the reward assured in heaven to those who have led a life of sanctity upon earth. It is with the accompaniment of Ashi's recompense that Sraosha approaches the seat of judgment to reward the righteous and wicked souls.²⁸⁹ Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to manifest unto him the incomparable things of his Divine Kingdom which are rewards of Vohu Manah,²⁹⁰ and seeks to know the reward that will be his in the Good Kingdom.²⁹¹

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

GEUSH TASHAN AND GEUSH URVAN

The Fashioner of animal life. The Gathas speak of three beings, Geush Tashan, 'the Creator of the Bull or Cow,' Geush Urvan, 'the Soul of the Bull or Cow,' and Gav Azi, 'the Bull [65] or Cow Azi.' Av. *gav*, and Skt. *go*, both mean bull or cow. The Vedic divinities Dyaus, 'the Heaven,' and Prithivi, 'the Earth,' have the epithets bull and cow applied to them from their physical characteristics.²⁹² After the analogy of the Skt. *go*, 'bull or cow,' which also means earth, some are led to think that the above expressions are used with reference to the earth.²⁹³ The Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Persian, and early Gujarati versionists, it may be noted, adhere to the original meaning and explain the words with

284. [Y51.10.](#)

285. [Y51.10.](#)

286. [Y34.12.](#)

287. [Y31.4.](#)

288. [Y50.3.](#)

289. [Y43.12.](#)

290. [Y33.13.](#)

291. [Y48.8.](#)

292. RV. 1. 160.3.

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

reference to the bull or cow.

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

Cattle were the source of all wealth and the ox who drew the plough and enabled man to cultivate his field was held in religious veneration among the pastoral and agricultural Aryans and Semites from early times. Mithra was the most powerful Indo-Iranian divinity when Zarathushtra preached his new religion. The Iranians worshipped Mithra as 'the lord of wide pastures,' which is his standing epithet in the Younger Avesta. According to the ancient myth Mithra killed the Primeval Bull and thereby became the creator and fashioner of the earthly beings. The Mithraic sculptures represent him sitting on the bull's back, seizing it by the nostrils with one hand and plunging his hunting knife deep into its back. Zarathushtra did not include him in the heavenly hierarchy, but adapted the legend of the immolation of the Primeval Bull by Mithra to ethical ends.²⁹⁴

[66] Geush Tashan stands in the Gathas for the creative activity of Ahura Mazda. He is said to be Ahura Mazda's own,²⁹⁵ and Mazda is spoken of as his lord.²⁹⁶ Geush Urvan is the spirit of the animal kingdom, and the obscure Gav Azi, who is spoken of in the Gathas as the giver of joy and prosperity, represents the animal creation. Tradition explains Gav Azi as 'the three years old cow.' It is evidently *gav aevodâta*, 'the sole created bull or cow,' of the Later Avesta,²⁹⁷ and *Gavyokdât*, 'the Sole Created Bull' of the Pahlavi and subsequent Sanskrit, Persian, and Gujarati versionists.

Zarathushtra declared the only mortal who could assuage the sufferings of the kine. Geush Urvan complains in a bewailing tone before Ahura Mazda that anger, rapine, plunder, and wickedness are harassing its very existence and therefore its soul sighs for a deliverer.²⁹⁸ Ahura Mazda holds a celestial conference to redress the grievances of the Soul of the Kine. After patient deliberations, in which Vohu Manah, the genius of cattle, Asha, the guardian of peaceful, settled life, and Geush Tashan take part, Vohu Manah, as the premier councillor, declares that Zarathushtra is the only mortal who has heard the divine commands, and he is the one person suited to be sent to the world

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

295. [Y31.9.](#)

296. [Y47.3.](#)

297. [Yt7.0;](#) [S1.12;](#) [S2.12.](#)

298. [Y29.1.](#)

299. [Y29.2-8.](#)

300. [Y29.9.](#)

as the spiritual and temporal lord who could remove the grievances of Geush Urvan.²⁹⁹ The Soul of the Kine is disconsolate and cries in despair that its sufferings are so great that it would be beyond the power of the prophet to assuage them.³⁰⁰ Further pleadings soften its despair and Zarathushtra is chosen for the mighty work.

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

Zarathushtra preaches the advantages of a settled life, and persuades his hearers to emerge from the pastoral life and embrace [67] agricultural habits. He exhorts them to work diligently for the kine's welfare, grow fodder for their nurture, and lead an active and an industrious life. This is a stage of transition, and all could not easily give up the unsettled habits of life in which they were brought up. Naturally, therefore, there is much disorder in the land and Zarathushtra enters upon his mission to establish ordered social life.

Agriculture and cattle-tending bring prosperity. Geush Tashan is mentioned along with Armaiti's earth and Ahura Mazda shows the advantageous path of the industrious agriculturist who tills the earth by his diligence and prospers Vohu Manah's cattle, whereas the indolent persons who do not practise husbandry fail to reap the fruits of life.³⁰¹ Ahura Mazda has created cattle that give the good things of life to men.³⁰² Moreover, he has created Armaiti's earth for the pasture of Geush Tashan.³⁰³ Whoso wishes pasture of cattle reaps the reward for his labour.³⁰⁴ Ahura Mazda fulfils the desire of the bodily life of those who, inspired by Vohu Manah, work for the welfare of the cattle.³⁰⁵ Unto those who lead righteous lives and work the will of Zarathushtra, will be given in the next world happiness such as the possession of cattle gives.³⁰⁶

301. [Y31.9, 10.](#)

302. [Y44.6.](#)

303. [Y47.3.](#)

304. [Y50.2.](#)

305. [Y34.14.](#)

306. [Y46.19.](#)

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M.N. Dhalla: *History of Zoroastrianism* (1938), part 2.

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NOTES:

CHAPTER VIII

PRAYERS AND RITUALS

Prayer is the heavenward soaring of the soul on wordy wings.

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

When his troubles are sleeping and the world smiles upon him, man sometimes forgets that he owes the happy turn in his life to God and prays not, or, if he prays he prays with his lips what he disowns with his heart. Some sorrow, some disaster throws him again on his knees. When darkness and gloom hang heavily upon him, when he is plunged into deep dejection, when he is cast down by the sense of his utter helplessness, when he thinks the world is giving way beneath his feet then to God he turns for succour. With uplifted hands and on bended knees, he unburdens himself of his afflictions, seeks strength in prayer and prays with his heart on his tongue. In his infinite mercy, God beckons him near, softens his bitterness, chases away his anxiety, strengthens him to triumph over his hardships, and fortifies [69] him against the assaults of vice and sin. The soothing gleam of joy dawns on

his sorrowful life and, with God as his rock, he finds himself on safe soil.

Homage, invocation, sacrifice, and the outpouring of prayer are the various expressions of the inward longings of man to commune with the divine, to enter into mutual intercourse with him. Those are outlets through which man pours forth his heart to the fountain of all bounty. The individual who surrenders himself to unseen powers, who kneels down in humility at the altar, who with uplifted hands pays homage to the hidden forces behind the rising sun or the waxing moon or the roaring ocean, and who carries an offering to the fire or a libation to the waters is psychologically greatly affected. Such attitudes of spirit have great subjective value, for they deeply influence man's character. Prayer is the highest type of expression through which man conveys to his Heavenly Father his feelings of joy and sorrow, gratitude and love, hope and fear, or in his hunger and thirst for the divine grace lays down his grievances before him, confesses his guilt, craves for help, seeks mercy. Devotion is the first requisite. Mere mutterings of a few formulas with the lips, while the heart does not pulsate with devotional fervour, are no prayer. Where there is no such prayer, there is no devotion; and where there is no devotion, there is no religion.

A host of gods claimed man's homage. Gods were bountiful and benevolent. Men prayed to them. Prayers were mostly petitions for gifts of health, long life, offspring, cattle, chariots, riches, and victory over enemies. In Egypt prayers were offered to Amen and Amen-Ra at Thebes, Re-Horus at Heliopolis, Ptah at Memphis, who rose to great eminence and drew a large concourse of worshippers to their shrines. In Babylonia and Assyria hymns were composed in honour of Marduk and Ashur, Shamash and Anu, Nergal and Ninib, and other gods and goddesses like Ishtar. Men and women humiliated themselves, exalted the divinities, addressed them with honorific epithets as wise, creators, powerful and merciful, sang paeans to them and prayed to them. Gods were bountiful and men prayed to them for long life, numerous offspring, and wealth. The Vedic Aryans invoked gods for specific gifts which were in their power to bestow. Agni and Prajapati were asked to grant them fulfilment of their desires and to shower wealth upon them. Agni and the Maruts [70] were asked to give heroic offspring and prosperity. Men besought Agni to be near them for their welfare and to be of easy access as a father is to his son. The Adityas were invoked to lead them to the path of pleasantness. Ushas was implored to give them good luck and glory and riches. Indra was besought to render them help in their conflict with the black-skinned Dasyus and to enable them to ward off their enemies. Indra and Varuna were asked to confer upon them happiness and objects of their desires. Yama was invoked to grant them long life upon earth

and happy life in the company of gods in heaven. Men dreaded Rudra's wrath and prayed humbly to avert his ill-will. Men prayed to gods and sought protection against hostile demons who worked for harm.

Zarathushtra purifies prayer. Ahura Mazda hears prayers even in thought. Righteous thinking is prayer. Such prayer lifts man to Ahura Mazda. Potent is the power of prayer unto Ahura Mazda, says Zarathushtra.¹ Like unto Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra addresses his prayers to Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti, either as Ahura Mazda's attributes or as the eternal beings representing holy virtues. He pours out his soul in passionate supplication to Ahura Mazda and longs to win his love.² With hands lifted in fervent homage and with devotional hymns, he yearns to come to Ahura Mazda.³ He praises and beseeches Ahura Mazda to be his own.⁴ Steeped in devotion, he comes to him with worship and praise.⁵ He seeks to approach Mazda with songs of praise and invocation.⁶ Through righteousness of Asha and good deeds of Vohu Manah, he says, he will come to Ahura Mazda worshipping with words of praise.⁷ He is anxious to behold his maker and to hold converse with him.⁸ He implores Ahura Mazda to come to him through Vohu Manah.⁹ In another place he beseeches Ahura Mazda to come in his person through Asha and Vohu Marrah.¹⁰ He is eager to win Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah and Asha for himself.¹¹ He desires to know when being enlightened he will see Ahura Mazda, Asha, Vohu Manah, Sraosha, and the throne of Ahura Mazda.¹² He appeals to Ahura Mazda, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti to come to him;¹³ to hearken unto him and have mercy upon him.¹⁴ The [71] faithful long to dedicate their songs of praise to Mazda, Asha, and Vahishta Manah and say that they will never incur their provocation.¹⁵ The songs of praise and homage, the prayers and good deeds of the righteous are stored in Garo Demana [Garothman], the Abode of Song.¹⁶

Bountiful Ahura Mazda is munificent in showering his gifts upon mankind and he knows what is best to give. Zarathushtra implores him to give what pleases him.¹⁷ He prays for long life;¹⁸ that he may be enabled to perform the good deeds of the Holy Spirit through righteousness.¹⁹ He asks him to apportion all good things of life and further the life of the body through Vohu Manah and Khshathra according to his will.²⁰ Vigour and endurance are the essential qualities that enable man to fight wickedness and cling to righteousness and Zarathushtra prays for them.²¹ These blessings are the earthly counterparts of weal and immortality, the heavenly boons represented by Haurvatat and Ameretat,²² and Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda to bestow them upon him through Vohu Manah according to his commandments.²³ He prays for the possession of spiritual riches of Ahura Mazda,²⁴ the riches that form part of the life of Vohu Manah.²⁵ He beseeches Ahura Mazda to come unto him for help

1. [Y28.10.](#)
2. [Y44.17.](#)
3. [Y50.8.](#)
4. [Y43.8.](#)
5. [Y34.6.](#)
6. [Y34.2.](#)
7. [Y50.9.](#)
8. [Y33.6.](#)
9. [Y28.6.](#)
10. [Y33.7.](#)
11. [Y28.3.](#)
12. [Y28.5.](#)
13. [Y28.3.](#)
14. [Y33.11.](#)
15. [Y28.9.](#)
16. [Y34.2.](#); [Y45.8.](#); [Y49.10.](#)
17. [51.18.](#)
18. [Y43.13.](#)
19. [Y28.1.](#)
20. [Y33.10.](#)
21. [Y43.1.](#)
22. [Y45.10.](#); [Y51.7.](#)
23. [Y51.7.](#)
24. [Y51.2.](#)
25. [Y43.1.](#)
26. [Y28.3.](#)

Manah.²⁵ He beseeches Ahura Mazda to come unto him for help in his need with Vohu Manah, Asha, Khshathra, and Armaiti.²⁶ He asks Ahura Mazda to shower his blessings upon the man who approaches him with invocation.²⁷ He prays for that divine blessing, the power of Ahura Mazda which he gives through Vohu Manah unto the holy man who furthers righteousness through words and deeds tinged with religious wisdom.²⁸ He invokes upon all the blessings of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, Asha, and Armaiti, who are all of one will.²⁹ His best prayer is heard and his ardent wish is fulfilled that those who once opposed his teachings have now come over to the faith to embrace the words and deeds of his religion and Ahura Mazda has extended to him the life of felicity now and for ever.³⁰

Zarathushtra faces bitter opposition from those who have played upon the credulity of the ignorant and the superstitious [72] and have prospered thereby. He invokes Ahura Mazda for the frustration of their mischievous machinations. Even prophets are moved with indignation and righteous wrath against evil-minded persons who lead mankind to destruction. Jesus, the embodiment of gentleness, denounces the Scribes and Pharisees with prophetic rage as fools and hypocrites, serpents and vipers; he overthrows the tables of money-changers, and casts them out of the temple with a whip of small cords. Zarathushtra exhorts those who seek Vohu Manah's blessings to put down violence and cruelty.³¹ He implores Armaiti not to let evil rulers govern the land.³² Bendva is the powerful foe who thwarts Zarathushtra's work of winning over men and women to righteousness, and he prays unto Ahura Mazda for his downfall.³³ He calls such persons liars, deceivers, and wicked.³⁴

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

27. [Y51.2.](#)

28. [Y51.21.](#)

29. [Y51.20.](#)

30. [Y53.1.](#)

31. [Y48.7.](#)

32. [Y48.5.](#)

33. [Y49.1.](#)

34. [Y49.2;](#) [53.8.](#)

35. [Y29.7.](#)

36. [Y28.7.](#)

37. [Y51.8.](#)

38. [Y50.6.](#)

39. [Y50.5.](#)

40. [Y43.14.](#)

41. [Y31.6.](#)

42. [Y44.17.](#)

43. [Y45.3.](#)

44. [Y32.13.](#)

45. [Y44.14.](#)

46. [Y28.5.](#)

says, he and his disciples will convert the wicked to their Lord.⁴⁶ The words of the wicked are also called Manthras, and the prophet exhorts his hearers not to listen to [73] them, because they bring destruction and death to the settlements of the faithful.⁴⁷

47. [Y31.18.](#)

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

Ritual is not religion; but it is a powerful aid to religious life. It feeds the emotional nature of man which plays the most prominent part in religious life. It inspires devotional fervour and purity of thoughts. Zarathushtra presumably utilized this formal side of religion to stimulate religious emotion and inspire righteous conduct. Tradition ascribes the division of society into priests, warriors, husbandmen, and artisans to the initiative of King Yima [=Jamshed] of the Golden Age of Iran. Zarathushtra does not recognize this fourfold professional order of society in the Gathas. He does not mention *âthravan*, 'the protector of fire' or priest. The Later Avesta speaks of the sacerdotal class by the title of *âthravan*. The Pahlavi texts continue to employ this priestly designation, and in addition speak of it as *magopat*, or *magpat*, corresponding to the Greek form Magi or Magus. Zarathushtra uses the forms derived from *maga*, 'great,' but it cannot be said that he uses them in reference to the priestly class. A threefold division of society appears in the Gathas, and Zarathushtra gives each one altogether different names. They are [74] called *xvaetu*, *airyaman*, and *verezena*, probably indicating his immediate disciples, the nobility, and the working classes respectively.⁴⁸

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

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

49. [Y33.6.](#)

50. [Y34.3.](#)

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

51. [Y33.8.](#)

[75]

CHAPTER IX

LIFE IS A BLESSING

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

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

The rich and poor, high and low alike can feast their eyes on the wealth of natural beauty and the marvels of natural phenomena. It is superstition that converts lovable nature into a haunt of dreadful demons and ghosts, goblins and witches. Everything in nature wears a cheerful outlook and a bright hue. New life is blossoming all around and nature throbs with joy. The dawn has her charms reserved for those who rise early. The poor are astir at dawn and begin their day by enjoying the marvellous beauties of nature. They witness the rays of the rising sun driving away the morning mists. They have no diamonds to decorate their bodies, but there are no diamonds to compare with the sparkling beads of dew that they see on the leaves of the trees around them.

when the virgin rays of the rising sun throw their lustre upon these. The poorest can inhale [76] in deep draughts the fresh breeze coming from fields which are being mown, from rich foliage and thick woods, or the sweet perfume of roses and jasmine wafted by the wind, or taste the sweet smell of the earth when it has been drenched by seasonal rain. It is a great joy to sit or lie under the shade of trees with their leafy branches gently swaying to and fro to refresh us with cool breeze fanning our faces, or to sit in a rose bower redolent of sweet perfume, or to sprawl or roll about or walk barefooted on the grass, or to romp in the gardens, or to run wild in the fields and woods, or to rest our eyes on the tender green of the grassy lawns stretched before us. Often do we long for calm and it gives us soothing calm to sit in the fields with nothing but the rustle of dry leaves to break the stillness. It thrills us with joy to hear the birds liting and carolling their sweet music. The nightingale's melodious song, the cooing of the dove restlessly moving its beautiful neck, the chirping and warbling of birds, the buzzing of insects, and the sound of the wind singing through the woods have a pleasing effect on our minds. It is as pleasant to watch the waters of a pond ruffled by the wind, or the eddies of a lake, or the slender jets of the water of the fountain, or the sunbeams dancing on the water, as to watch the roaring waves rolling up with weakening ripples and softly breaking at our feet. It is pleasing to hear the noise of the heavy rain spattering against the window panes and the puddles in the street, or to see the snow falling in fleecy flakes. It cheers us to see the crimson glow at the sunset, the starlit firmament, powerful wind driving the fleecy clouds before it, the gambolling of soft, white cloudlets and their chasing one another like kittens, the bashful endeavour of the moon to peep from between the clouds, or the moon bravely fighting her way out from the heavy dark clouds interrupting her course and shrouding her in darkness, or the gorgeous pageant of the moon sailing the sky on a clear night in her majestic glory attended by her myriad sparkling handmaids, or the moon flooding the earth with her light and bathing the trees in silver shine, or the glittering rays of the moon drawing silvery lines on the waters. Nature delights us in her multifarious phases. It gives us untold joy and pleasure to be with her for our company. Our hearts beat in unison with the mighty heart of nature.

There is infinite joy in watching the play and amusements of [77] children. There is pleasure in watching games and sports played by others. There is yet greater pleasure in our own singing, dancing, walking, running, riding, driving, playing, roaming in a forest buzzing with life or in the fields of waving grass, skating, swimming, having a plunge in cool surging waves of the ocean on a summer day or rowing amid the rhythmic splash of the oars and a variety of entertainments.

The enlightened find joy in rational pastimes. They saunter in

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

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

Happiness unto him who gives happiness unto others. Thus says Zarathushtra at the gray dawn of history.¹ The sublime precept is again and again imparted to mankind in their days by Confucius, Hillel, and Jesus and is contained in the Pentateuch and the Book of Tobit. The noblest of mankind live to make others happy. Kindly feelings for others make them insensible to their own privations. They impose privation upon themselves to save something for the needy. They place service before self and expose their lives and limbs to imminent peril [78] to rescue others in danger. They think little of themselves and much of others, and wear out their lives in the service of others. In all ages and places there have been noble men and women who would willingly sacrifice their lives a hundred times over for some ideal, some noble cause. Men of generous disposition have always laboured to bring sunshine in the lives of their fellow-men. Such persons have been eager to share their own happiness with their neighbours. Life lived for others is life at its best. When everybody will wish everybody well and when everybody will endeavour to live for all and all will labour to live for everybody, men and women will be angels in flesh inhabiting the world. Service to fellowmen is the best service to Mazda.

1. [Y43.1.](#)

Vitality and endurance are priceless boons. The body is the most marvellous apparatus prerequisite for mental and spiritual activity. Zarathushtra is the first to teach that the purity of the body leads to the purity of the mind and the pure in mind become

pure in spirit. Life is struggle and a healthy, sound and strong body is indispensable for combating physical, social, and moral evil. Everyone has to gird up his loins for the fray and with a sound and rigorous body be quick in his gait for the arduous duty not to do less than his best in life. It is robust health that creates bodily vigour and vitality. Zarathushtra lays constant emphasis on a sound and agile body, for it is indispensable for all activities of mind and spirit. The spirit may be daring and eager to fight the battles of life, but it cannot fulfil the mission of its life if it is enshrouded in a weak body. Zarathushtra prays for his followers to be brimful of vitality and energy which may give them success in all their physical, mental, and spiritual efforts to uplift humanity. Vitality and endurance, or *utayûitî* and *tevishî*, are the most incomparable earthly boons given by Haurvatat and Ameretat. These superb qualities of the body make for physical exuberance which results in the strenuous, untiring, zealous activity on the part of man. Man of overflowing vitality, unfailing endurance, abnormal energy, undaunted courage, restless activity, whose life is bubbling over with youthful exuberance, who is intoxicated by the exhilarating enthusiasm, laughs in the face of obstacles and hardships, and looks death defiantly in the face, lives a whole life in the short span of time and changes history. Physical exuberance is a stimulant to [79] mental and spiritual exuberance. The harmonious adjustment creates zest for life, and unbounded enthusiasm for ameliorative work. The ordinary man in his undertakings and the patriot who changes the destiny of his country and the prophet who revolutionizes man's social and moral life, all work with diverse enthusiasms created by the bodily, mental, and spiritual exuberance.

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

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

2. [Y28.6.](#)

3. [Y28.2.](#)

4. [Y29.10.](#)

5. [Y33.10.](#)

6. [Y48.11.](#)

7. [Y48.6.](#)

8. [Y49.5.](#)

9. [Y32.5.](#)

10. [Y28.9.](#)

11. [Y28.7.](#)

12. [Y28.10.](#)

thoughts.¹²

Mazda is implored to grant vitality and endurance which are the earthly gifts of Haurvatat and Ameretat.¹³ Armaiti confers these boons upon the inmates of happy homes.¹⁴ Zarathushtra prays for long life.¹⁵ Mazda is besought to bestow happiness and joy for all the days of a long life upon those who pray for them.¹⁶ The happiness and blessings of life come unto those that are righteous.¹⁷ The devout pray for the riches of Good Mind through Righteousness that may bring unto them joy of [80] long life.¹⁸ Vohu Manah is invoked to give reward to men according to their deeds.¹⁹ Ahura Mazda is implored to grant vitality through Armaiti and through the Holiest Spirit, mighty power through Asha, and supremacy through Vohu Manah.²⁰

13. [Y43.1](#); [45.10](#); [51.7](#).

14. [Y48.6](#).

15. [Y33.5](#).

16. [Y43.2](#); [50.5](#).

17. [Y51.8](#), [9](#), [20](#).

18. [Y28.7](#), [8](#); [Y43.12](#).

19. [Y43.16](#).

20. [Y33.12](#).

[81]

CHAPTER X

EVIL

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

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

The existence of evil is a stubborn fact of life. The creation has not only a bright but also a dark side, and the latter is to be accounted for. All is not well with the universe. There is something that savours of bad. The optimist who says that all is right with the world is as much at fault as the pessimist who says that all is wrong. It is not good to dilate upon wrongs, real and imaginary, and pine away under melancholy and gloom; it is

wrong to groan and worry over the darkness of the night, oblivious of the light of the day; but it is equally wrong to dismiss [82] this great question in a rough-and-ready way by denying outright the existence of evil. We cannot dismiss this eternal problem with a shrug of the shoulder. Evil is far too potent a factor in human life to permit us to turn a blind eye to it. It is too real to be ignored and sophistically explained away.

Man finds that he lives in a hostile world. The elements and animals and his fellowmen combine to make war upon him. Great is the wrath of the elements. Nature is beautiful and kindly, benevolent and bountiful, wise and frugal, cheering and comforting, ennobling and inspiring. But Providence governs the universe by the law of contraries. In her malevolent mood, nature is a callous and capricious and frightful monster, raging and thundering, wasting and withering, scorching and burning, drowning and burying, devastating and destroying, devouring and killing. Her catastrophes and cataclysms work havoc upon earth. Her magic wand spells destruction and death all around. With appalling suddenness, in one terrific moment, she razes to the ground marvels of man, raised by his toil and industry of years. Her burning mountains, in their frightful freaks, rain brimstone and fire upon fertile fields, convert prosperous towns in one raging sea of flame, emit molten metals, and, let loose hell on earth. Her terrific quakes bring havoc upon villages and towns, overwhelm sleeping humanity reposing in its implicit confidence in the gentle mother earth, rudely wake men, women, and children, and mercilessly drive them headlong, demented and delirious, in futile search of shelter and safety and bury their unwary victims deep under the debris. Her furious hurricanes blow about the weeping weaklings of the human and animal world like autumn leaves and bury them alive in the sandy solitudes of the desert. The unbridled gushing waters of her inundations carry all life and property before them. Her famines and droughts kill vegetation and decimate animals and human beings. Her giant trees strangle and deal out death to small trees growing about them in the forests. Wild creepers entwine themselves like serpents round trees and choke their lives out. Countless millions of insects and ants gnaw trees down to dust and death, ravage the crops, and kill live stock. A reign of struggle to the death is witnessed in the animal world. The strong live and thrive by devouring the weak in the forests. Millions of animals and birds and fishes are born to be so many morsels to the stronger of their [83] species. She breeds plagues and pestilences and looses death to hold its carnival. Leprosy distorts the countenances of hundreds of thousands of men and women, renders loathsome their touch, and encrusts their bodies with plague spots of disease more horrible than death.

The greater enemy of men than elements and animals, however, is man himself. The human scourges of God, like Attila or

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

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

Life is co-operation with good and conflict with evil. Good and evil are co-existing polarities. Man can think of things only in terms of their opposites. Light is light because of darkness. Health is a coveted boon, as its loss heralds sickness. Life is [84] valued as Ahura Mazda's most incomparable gift, as lurking death threatens its extinction. Happiness is pleasant, for misery is unbearable. Riches rise in worth owing to the dread of poverty. Joy is gratifying, for sorrow aims at killing it. Virtue is the health of the spirit, for vice is its disease. Righteousness is the life of the spirit, for wickedness spells its death.

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

"Resist Evil" is the clarion call of Zarathushtra to humanity. Evil is equally the enemy of Ahura Mazda and man, and man is created a comrade in arms to resist it in all its manifestations. It is

his birthright to fight evil. He shares Ahura Mazda's work of mending evil. The world is a battlefield and man is a soldier in the eternal struggle. The soldier's duty is to stand firm at his post and fight even to the death. If he holds overtures with the enemy, or succumbs to his wiles, he is a rebel; if he evades fight, or ignores it, or turns his back upon the enemy, he is a coward, dishonouring his manhood.

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

Zoroastrianism is essentially militant. It stirs human hearts to repugnance towards evil; it spurs man to fight it with all his being, body, mind, and spirit. Not to resist evil with offensive and defensive warfare against it is either to be callous or cowardly, or both in one's person; it is to fail in one's duty to mankind and be false to the redemptive task assigned by Ahura Mazda to man. Evil is the common enemy of Ahura Mazda and man, and man is engaged in fighting as an ally of the [85] godhead. In his fight against evil, he is a co-worker and a fellow-combatant with Ahura Mazda. Men of all times and all places have to fight individually and collectively for the mighty cause. Man has to fight the forces of evil to his last breath. His life is one of a continued crusade against the powers of wickedness. He has to adjust social wrongs, regenerate society, and redeem the world of humanity.

Man's duty to resist evil in his own nature. Man was animal but yesterday. Today he is man, though not devoid of animal traits. His destiny is to be angel, and tomorrow he shall be that also. Everyone has in his or her power to be a saint. But the way to attain sainthood and divinity is distant and beset with countless difficulties. Every step in advance is a struggle. The animal in man is obdurate and persistent, cunning and resourceful. To escape from his grip, to destroy his power, to eliminate him, man has to fight a hundred battles. Man's inner life is a perpetual warfare between animal and human within his breast. A violent struggle is going on in every human heart between the higher impulses to renounce animal appetites, and the lower instincts to satisfy them. Man is a divided self, divided mind, divided will, and feels within him the conflict of two opposing natures. The

2. [Y45.2.](#)

one half of man's being is always at war with his other half. When the Good Spirit first met the Evil Spirit, he said that he was opposed to him in his thoughts and words and deeds and faith and conscience and soul and every thing.² The same complete polarity obtains between the higher self and the lower self in man. The one stands for truth, virtue, and righteousness, the other represents falsehood, vice, and wickedness. Though inhabitants of the same tenement, they are poles apart in their thoughts, words, deeds, feelings, and aspirations. What is light to one is darkness to the other, and what is nourishment to the one is poison to the other. When the animal in man gets the better of the human, it makes for his imperfection, it is his curse, his enemy, his evil. Evil thoughts and dark passions are its emissaries. They are to be combated and conquered, if man desires to fulfil his destiny. The storm of evil that arises within man is no less violent than any which he encounters in the outer world. Resistance to evil in the one is as instinctive as it is in the other. This resistance is conducive to [86] higher life. It breeds in man the qualities of strenuous effort, toil, courage, strength, and sacrifice. Courageous fight to vanquish evil builds character. Facing aggressive evil with fortitude, fighting temptations, and overcoming evil is progressive ascent towards individual perfection.

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

But society is yet imperfect in all phases of its life. It has its stray dogs and pouncing wolves and cunning serpents. They are menaces to its well-being, and vigorous resistance to their vicious propensities and evil doings is indispensable for the very life of society. In primitive society the work of redressing wrongs remains in the hands of aggrieved individuals, and as individuals are actuated by vengeance, hatred is met by hatred, blood is avenged by blood, and evil is repaid by evil. In organized society the right of redressing wrongs is taken from the individual. Society interferes, and in its authoritative position [87] as State, undertakes to dispense justice to warring factions. Justice ceases to be vengeance, but cannot dispense with the punishing rod. Society cannot exist without laws, and all legislation implies enforcement of laws by punishing their infringement. To punish, however, is to use force for the resistance of evil. An imperfect society in an imperfect world cannot exist without its courts and constabularies, its prisons and scaffolds. The State as police cannot do its duty without resort to physical force. If the guardians of society were to don ash-coloured robes, and retreat before the forces of evil, or make themselves known as non-resistants to evil, unprotected society would soon welter in crime and bloodshed. Militant evil, with no deterrent combatants in the field, would throttle passive good to death.

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

To be good and eschew evil are passive virtues; to further good and to fight evil are active virtues. Personal salvation is the basic principle, the motive power that inspires all religious life. Zarathushtra insists that every man's duty is to seek salvation of all mankind. To secure individual salvation and leave others to their fate, without working and struggling for their salvation, is to fail in one's duty towards his fellow-men. To be good, but not to

make others good; not to be evil, yet not to resist evil caused by others, are merely negative virtues. Just as [88] the individual's duty ends not in practising passive virtues which tend to make him good, but in making others good, so also he must not rest when he has eradicated his evil thoughts, bridled his passions, and overcome the evil that lurks in his inward nature, but he has further to reclaim others who have embraced evil. It is not only passive resistance that he has to offer to evil, but, adopting an aggressive attitude towards evil of all kinds, he has to combat and rout it. It is not enough that he should himself eschew evil; he must combat evil in others. He cannot remain a passive spectator while his neighbour is suffering. He is not to be a passive onlooker of, or to connive at some wrong on the ground that he is not the originator of it. The fact that something evil and imperfect exists around him, no matter by whom caused, is a sufficient reason why he should rush into the fray and do his share to mitigate and remove it. Nay, he has even to hunt out the hydra of wrong and strike at its many heads, so that the world of goodness may not suffer.

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

Everyone can contribute his or her mite, in the manifold walks of life, to the grand end of bringing about the final victory of good and the utter defeat of evil. The poorest man, who cheerfully fulfils his obligations of father and husband, brother and son, who struggles with poverty, yet loves independence and honour, who extends not his hand for alms, but lives on the slender earnings of his honest toil, who rears his children into good men and women does his duty by goodness, and does it well. The man who has energy and time, and employs both of these in social service of any kind, who organizes philanthropic work, preparing ameliorative schemes and who spends his bodily vigour and leisure hours for the betterment of humanity, succours goodness. The rich man, who gives away his wealth in the [89] name of Ahura Mazda to alleviate the sufferings of the needy, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the sick, builds homes for the homeless; promotes goodness. The man of learning and wisdom, who enlightens and inspires, ennobles and uplifts mankind, furthers goodness. The man of adventurous spirit who reclaims arid wastes, fertilizes barren lands, clears the forests of wild beasts; or the man of talents, who discovers an antidote to some

disease, a preventive to epidemics and plagues, extirpates germs and bacteria, combats heroically physical evil. One who struggles hard for the elimination of the darkness of the mind, who crusades against superstition and bigotry, is combating mental evil. The man who struggles with the forces of corruption and injustice, who fights for the redress of wrongs, who blunts the edge of the tyrant's sword, is routing the forces of social evil. A righteous person who wages a relentless war against immorality, who pares the wings of vice and cripples crime, is a hero of the war against moral evil.

ANGRA MAINYU

The Evil Spirit and his characteristics. Just as man, in his religious evolution, comes to the belief in the existence of kindly invisible beings who protect and nourish and help him, so he discovers that there are hostile powers who wish him evil. Such demons are presided over by powerful chiefs who rule over the world of darkness and evil. They have weak personalities as incarnating evil, but each one is Satan in the making. Set was in conflict with Horus in Egypt, as Tiamat was with Marduk in Babylonia, and Vritra with Indra among the Indo-Iranians.

The Evil Spirit who disputes the sovereignty over human hearts in Iran with the Holy Spirit, is not given a proper name in the Gathas. Of the two primeval Spirits, the one who chose evil as his sphere of activity is given the epithet *angra*, meaning enemy or evil. Angra Mainyu thus means the Enemy or the Evil Spirit. This attribute is applied once directly to the Evil Spirit.³ In another place it is said why is a bad (*angra*) man not like unto Angra, 'The Evil One,' referring evidently to Angra Mainyu, or the Evil Spirit.⁴ The term *angra* is thus used more [90] than once in the ordinary meaning 'evil' as a designation of wicked men.⁵ He is given the epithet *aka*, 'bad.'⁶ In one place he is given the name Aka Mainyu, 'the Bad Spirit.'⁷ Yet in another instance he is termed *dregvant*, or the Wicked One.⁸

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

The Evil Spirit lures men by his mischievous machinations to the path of wickedness, and lulls their spiritual senses to repose. He is the inveterate foe of humanity. Man, we may infer from the tone of the Gathas, should avoid him as he would a pestilence. Fortunate is he who successfully bridles the tumult of the Evil

3. [Y45.2.](#)
4. [Y44.12.](#)
5. [Y43.15;](#) [44.12;](#) [48.10.](#)
6. [Y30.3.](#)
7. [Y32.5.](#)
8. [Y30.5.](#) [*dregvant* literally means 'possessing *druj*'. -JHP]
9. [Y45.2.](#)
10. [Y30.3.](#)
11. [Y30.5.](#)
12. [Y30.4.](#)
13. [Y44.12.](#)

Spirit and breaks the heavy chains that fetter his spirit. But woe to him who revolts from the Good Spirit, pays homage to the author of evil, and lives in bondage to him. Such a man is a moral pervert, a rebel, and suffers death in the spirit. The normal state of man is to be always on the side of the good, and by any act of going over to the realm of evil he creates for himself an unnatural situation. His sacred duty is to espouse the cause of the Good Spirit.

DAEVAS

The infernal crew. The diabolic spirits who have entered into a compact with Angra Mainyu to mar the good creation of Ahura Mazda are the Daevas, or demons. They are the offspring of the Evil Mind and spread their mischief over all seven zones.¹⁴ The Evil Spirit has taught them to mislead men through evil thought, evil word, and evil deed.¹⁵ The Daevas instigate the enemies of settled life to give the cattle to violence.¹⁶ Mazda best remembers the misdeeds of these recreants and he judges [91] accordingly.¹⁷ When the two primal spirits of good and evil came together at the beginning of creation the demons chose evil and rushed with one accord to bring destruction to mankind.¹⁸ The wicked are the beloved of the demons, for they are the ones that renounce the Good Mind and revolt from the wisdom of Ahura Mazda and Righteousness.¹⁹ The demons should therefore be abjured,²⁰ and the Saviour Saoshyant will be the friend, brother, and father of those who hate them.²¹ The Daevas will receive their due at the final Dispensation when Righteousness will smite Wickedness.²²

As Ahura Mazda holds his council of celestial beings, so Angra Mainyu maintains in his infernal court a retinue of male and female demons. In opposition to every archangel and angel, the younger literature sets up a corresponding fiend. These form exact counterparts of the powers of goodness, and always act in direct opposition to them. We do not find the symmetry of diametric opposites between these rival forces carried out to completion in the extant Gathic literature. The names of not all the corresponding demons, who are the opponents of Mazda's ministering angels, are found. The rivals of Vohu Manah, Asha, and Sraosha are mentioned by names, as Aka Manah, Druj, and Aeshma, but with the exception of Druj, the adversary of Asha, the rest are seen working only sporadically and not in systematic antagonism to their corresponding rival good spirits. Taromaiti, or heresy, the opponent of Armaiti, is named but once,²³ though the term does not occur in this particular passage as a personified demon. Aka Manah, Druj, and Aeshma are the only Daevas expressly mentioned in the Gathas. We shall deal with these separately.

AKA MANAH

The Evil Mind. Aka Manah is mentioned only three times in the

14. [Y32.3.](#)

15. [Y32.5.](#)

16. [Y44.20.](#)

17. [Y29.4.](#)

18. [Y30.6.](#)

19. [Y32.4.](#)

20. [Y34.5.](#)

21. [Y45.11.](#)

22. [Y48.1.](#)

23. [Y33.4.](#)

24. [Y32.3;](#) [Y33.4;](#) [Y47.5.](#)

Gathas.²⁴ Even in his name he is the antithesis of his heavenly rival Vohu Manah, or Good Mind. Like his celestial adversary, who is sometimes called Vahishta Manah, 'Best Mind,' this fiend is also styled Achishta Manah or 'Worst Mind.' The [92] Daevas, it is said, chose to embrace the Worst Mind.²⁵ They are the progeny of Aka Manah.²⁶ Zarathushtra undertakes by his prayer to drive out the demon of Evil Mind from before him, that is, from the world of Righteousness.²⁷ When man's mind is not filled with the good thoughts of Vohu Manah, it becomes an easy prey to the onslaughts of the evil thoughts of Aka Manah. Whosoever is a victim to Aka Manah finds his thoughts enslaved by him. As heaven is associated with Vohu Manah, hell is mentioned as the region of Aka Manah. The tyrant Grehma and his wicked followers who destroy life, we are told, will go to the Abode of the Worst Mind.²⁸

- 25. [Y30.6.](#)
- 26. [Y32.3.](#)
- 27. [Y33.4;](#) [Y47.5.](#)
- 28. [Y32.13.](#)

DRUJ

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

The adherents of Druj. The man who yields to the temptations of Druj is a dregvant, 'wicked one,' as opposed to the *ashavan*, 'righteous one,' who follows Asha.²⁹ Angra Mainyu himself is called dregvant.³⁰ The wicked who are themselves [93] of evil faith seek to mislead others.³¹ They defy the good admonitions of the Deity and are not willing to hear the good counsel, the divine word of the Good Mind. Zarathushtra seeks means, therefore, to drive out their wickedness.³² He exhorts his audience to listen attentively to his inspired teachings, so that the teacher of evil may not thereafter injure them.³³ The prophet comes as the lord between the parties of the righteous and the wicked and those whose good and evil deeds balance.³⁴ He preaches to those who,

- 29. [Y29.2, 5;](#) [30.11;](#) [46.1, 4.](#)
- 30. [Y30.5.](#)
- 31. [Y45.1.](#)
- 32. [Y44.13.](#)
- 33. [Y45.1.](#)
- 34. [Y31.2;](#) [33.1.](#)
- 35. [Y31.1.](#)
- 36. [Y47.5.](#)

being led astray by the evil advice of Druj, smite the world of righteousness.³⁵ The wicked are far from the good-will of Ahura Mazda; their sinful deeds make them companions of Evil Mind.³⁶ They strive to estrange the righteous from the Best Mind,³⁷ and from the best deeds.³⁸ They strive to reduce all others to their own class. They bring distress and death to the house, village, town, and country, through their wicked spells.³⁹ He who harasses the prophet is the child of Druj.⁴⁰

37. [Y32.11.](#)

38. [Y32.12.](#)

39. [Y31.18.](#)

40. [Y51.10.](#)

Druj's followers are to be requited with evil in this world. In his crusade against the Kingdom of Wickedness, Zoroaster is unsparing and even unforgiving. We do not see, in the words handed down from his lips, the gentler side of virtue of returning good for evil. Here we have the ethics of retaliation. Once the antithesis between the Kingdom of Righteousness and Wickedness is sharply defined, the latter is to be relentlessly opposed. The two parties are on the war-path, and strict discipline demands that the righteous man will on no account wink at or palliate wickedness, and let the evildoer go free without retribution. Wrong is to be handled as wrong, and the man who does wrong is to be met with his own weapons. Evil is to be requited by evil and not by goodness. Indifference and leniency threaten only to further the domain of Wickedness. Consequently evil is to be relentlessly put down.

Zarathushtra is the friend of the righteous, but a veritable foe to the wicked.⁴¹ The wicked lords of the land vehemently oppose his work;⁴² it is they who hinder the righteous in the pursuit of goodness. He who hurls these miscreants down from [94] power clears the way for the good teachings.⁴³ Succouring the wicked is tantamount to practising wickedness. It is expressly said that the one who is good to the wicked is himself wicked.⁴⁴ Those who with their thoughts, words, and deeds bring punishment to the wicked fulfil the desire of Mazda.⁴⁵ No one, therefore, should be the cause of rejoicing to the wicked.⁴⁶ Every one, on the contrary should always practise goodness towards the righteous, but deal out ill to the wicked.⁴⁷ The man of truthful words should not give chieftainship to the wicked.⁴⁸

41. [Y43.8.](#)

42. [Y46.1.](#)

43. [Y46.4.](#)

44. [Y46.6.](#)

45. [Y33.2.](#)

46. [Y43.15.](#)

47. [Y47.4.](#)

48. [Y49.9.](#)

Druj's disciples fare no better in the next world. Ahura Mazda reckons the followers of Druj as wicked, and therefore retribution and misery await their souls.⁴⁹ Ahura Mazda gives happiness and joy hereafter to the righteous, but on the wicked he inflicts punishment and pain.⁵⁰ The wicked, according to the teachings of the Gathas, are led by their conscience through their own deeds to the Abode of Darkness.⁵¹ One of the names of the inferno, as we shall see, is *drujo demâna*, 'Abode of Druj.' There rush the wilfully blind and deaf⁵² thither go to perdition the crew of the wicked.⁵³

49. [Y43.4;](#) [Y45.7](#)

50. [Y31.14, 15;](#) [Y51.8, 9.](#)

51. [Y31.20.](#)

52. [Y46.11;](#) [Y51.14.](#)

53. [Y49.11.](#)

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

- 54. [Y30.8.](#)
- 55. [Y49.3.](#)
- 56. [Y31.4.](#)
- 57. [Y44.14.](#)
- 58. [Y48.2.](#)
- 59. [Y30.10.](#)

[95]

AESHMA

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

- 60. [Y29.1.](#)
- 61. [Y29.2.](#)
- 62. [Y30.6.](#)
- 63. [Y48.12.](#)
- 64. [Y48.7.](#)

[96]

CHAPTER XI

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Death lives by feeding on life. Death is ever at man's heels. It is closer to him than his shadow. Man has always desired to gain immunity from death. It is only when man is downcast and depressed that he looks to death as deliverer and says that he would be better dead than live and suffer. When life becomes dreary and dark, death, assumes a bright hue and promises the unfortunate ones to drown their miseries in the darkness of the grave, and to give them rest which life has not given them. When

life takes its normal course, man blames God that he should have permitted death to stalk the earth. Out of compassion for mankind, it is said, the Babylonian god Ea once endeavoured to secure immortality for it but failed in his attempt. Both gods and men considered the indefinite prolongation of life as the supremest blessing. But the gods zealously guarded this much coveted boon and kept it as their exclusive possession. They grew jealous and frustrated men's attempt to win immortality, for men would be gods if they got the priceless prize. The hero Gilgamesh passionately longed for immortal life and went in search of an escape from death. He was informed by the shade of his heroic compatriot whom death had taken away from him that death was the final fate of man and he was indulging in futile hopes. Immortal life was for gods only. Death was the lot of mankind and even a hero like Gilgamesh with all his marvellous achievements could not escape it. It was, therefore, advisable for him to give up yearning for what was unattainable and rather whole-heartedly enjoy life as long as it lasted and death was yet far off. He is advised by others to don fine raiment, to anoint himself with oil, to fill his belly with fine food and wine, to love the woman of his bosom and be merry by day and by night, for death would put an end to his life at any moment.

Death comes with stealthy steps. When the hour sounds [97] and death issues its summons and knocks at the door, nothing in the world, can keep it out. Death is a grim harvester. It is absolutely heedless of the seasons of life. It swings its sickle and takes away some in the heyday of their summer. It strikes others when they are in the full vigour of life before their life-work is finished and they have enjoyed the greatness they have built. To others who lie lingering in bed suffering excruciating agonies of pain it comes with cruel slowness leisurely moving with feet of lead and leaves them long writhing in the convulsions of fading life. Its kiss is killing and its embrace is extinction. It is difficult to look it in the face without quailing. Its helpless victim lies tossing in bed fighting in vain to keep off its icy hands circling round his neck to smother and squeeze out life. Death's ghastly pallor comes over his livid face the breath begins to rattle laboriously in the throat his voice is stilled, he stares with sightless eyes, his dear ones around him watch with bated breath his every breath fearing it to be his last, the convulsions of the body, at grip with the soul struggling to leave it, grow keener, life gradually ebbs out of him, it dries up in his veins, the heart ceases its beating, and he gives up his ghost. Death prostrates him in the dust. He sleeps in solitude in the cold grave to be eaten up bit by bit in its decay by worms or is consumed by the roaring tongues of red hot fire or is torn limb from limb by vultures who make a meal of him.

Death is man's last sleep from which he wakes up in the other

world. Death sets man brooding over the whereabouts of the dead who has just ceased breathing and fails to respond to the call of the living. It is the greatest mystery, with the solution of which man is always confronted. Man has ever longed to lift the veil that hides it and look behind it. It was an enigma to the first man upon earth and an enigma still it is to us. From the gray dawn of civilization man has vaguely believed that the dead do not die altogether. The Egyptians are among the earliest of the civilized peoples who have left records of their beliefs they held some seven thousand years ago. They could not account for the disappearance of the individual at his death and conjectured that unseen and unheard though the dead one had become, he existed somewhere and somehow. Though he had dropped his vesture of clay he had adopted some invisible replica of it and had thrown a veil over himself and his doings that cannot be [98] penetrated. The grave where his last remains were deposited, they thought, was his natural abode where he lived the life that he hitherto led, but only invisibly. Naturally enough he hungered and thirsted, worked and rested, loved and hated, as he did while alive. So also did the Babylonians believe that the dead departed to the subterranean regions and lived their invisible lives.

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

Zarathushtra systematically speaks of two different worlds, this one and the next. The present, or the earthly world, is called *astvant*, 'corporeal,' and the other or the heavenly world is called *manahya*, 'spiritual,' literally, 'of thought.'¹ Body and soul are the two main constituents in the formation of man. These two have their respective organs and other spiritual and material essentials. So long as these work in unison man lives, and lives for the best in this world. The Evil Spirit has introduced death in the world,² which brings the dissolution of these diverse elements. The soul exists for the short span of its life on earth in the tenement of the body. When the material frame crumbles into dust it flees heavenward. The bodily death does not mean the death of the soul, for that is immortal.³ Death is not the end of man's life, for he lives in heaven in spirit and he lives upon earth in posterity. The present life is a prelude to the future life. It is a pilgrimage to a higher life. Man should therefore bethink himself to prepare for the journey to the next world when he departs from this life. He will get in heaven what he craves for in vain upon earth. He will have for actual experience in heaven the best and perfect condition which he visualizes but imperfectly in thought on

1. [Y28.2](#); [43.3](#).

2. [Y30.4](#).

3. [Y45.7](#).

earth.

The belief that he will one day meet the dear departed lightens man's burden of bereavement. Death casts the greatest gloom around us. Time, in its fulness, softens the sorrow of the bereaved, wipes away his tears, and heals the wound [99] inflicted by death. But there are always persons of deep emotional nature and gentle feelings who are disconsolate. Their dear ones are torn from them whom they cannot forget. Death lacerates the heart of fond parents by snatching away from their bosom their only child that was the apple of their eyes. The devoted wife in the neighbourhood is deprived of her doting husband, who was the idol of her heart and was all that she most loved on earth. Life seems to be empty and hollow to yet another father who has lost his youthful son, who was the joy of his heart and pride of his life. The bereaved grieve and weep, sigh and sob, cry and pray that God may give them back their dear ones, who had shared their joys and sorrows at the fire hearth, but God does not give them back. The dead have gone to the world from where there is no return. With the passing away of their beloved ones, flowers seem to have lost their fragrance, life is shorn of its sweetness, the world has lost its light, and everything around seems to be dead to them. The dead do not pass out of their lives. The music of their voices lingers in their minds, their images float before their vision, their faces haunt them during the day, and they dream of them at night. If they walk in the garden they think they see the airy figures of their dear ones under the shade of the pine trees; if they turn aside they feel they are followed by the ghosts of their dead; If they close the door of their abodes they think they hear the dead knocking at their doors; if they open the doors they fancy they hear the retreating steps of the dead.

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

[100] **The anomalies of earthly life and their final adjustment in heaven.** The unequal distribution of earthly possessions among mankind, the unequal opportunities held out to men, the

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

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

Reward for the good and retribution for the evil. Looking to the history of the origin of this belief among the cultured peoples prior to the advent of Zarathushtra, we find that the growth of ethical concepts led the early Egyptians to believe in the judgment of the soul in the next world. The heavenly tribunal was presided over by Osiris and his associates. Before each of these subordinate judges the soul had to declare that it had not

committed the various sins which were enumerated before it name by name. Its heart was weighed in a balance. The soul that came out successful from the trial was escorted by Horus to Osiris who now awarded it bliss. Woe unto the one who could not stand the test at the seat of judgment, for a hippopotamus sitting on the watch pounced upon it and made a morsel of its diet.

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

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

The doctrine of reward and retribution in the other world forms the chief part of the ethical teachings of Zarathushtra's Gathas.⁴ All precepts in the sacred stanzas are generally accompanied by a repeated mention of reward or retribution in this or [102] the next world, Men of elevated minds may hold that it is not a high moral standard in which an individual practises virtue in the hope of reward and eschews vice for fear of retribution. But to be entirely disinterested in the acting of righteousness, or to follow virtue for virtue's sake, is a saintly prerogative. And the world is not made up of saints. The saint is the acme in the moral sphere, as is the intellectual genius in the realm of reason. Both form the climaxes in the two distinct spheres of human activity. The world begets tens of millions of average men, in contrast to the few isolated types of master-spirits who inspire the world with their boundless devotion or enlighten it by their profound intellect. These give a new life and impetus to the moral and intellectual activities of mankind. The saintly type of virtue is the goal which humanity feebly attempts to reach. Humanity, as a whole, is evolving towards this ideal type of virtue, but meanwhile — and let this be emphasized till the striven for goal is reached — it needs some sort of incentive to good conduct in the lives of its masses. Hence the prime motive of their embracing righteousness is the hope of future reward, and that of shunning wickedness is the fear of retribution. In human affairs we have to be content with getting something less than ideal.

4. [Y30.10](#); [31.14, 20](#); [45.7](#); [51.6, 8, 9](#).

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

5. [43.13.](#)

6. [44.8.](#)

7. [45.8.](#)

8. [43.4.](#)

9. [Y28.2.](#)

The soul reaps as it has sown. The soul is the master of the body and is responsible for the good or the evil deeds it has done in this life. Man carves his destiny for the next world by his thoughts, words, and deeds in this life, and good or evil destiny awaits the soul in the next, or the spiritual world, which is [103] essentially the place of reward and retribution. The life in this world is incomplete without its prolongation in the heavenly world, for it is only a life of probation, and the harvest of good or evil deeds sown here is to be reaped hereafter by the soul in the world of the spirit. Whether the soul, on embarking to the next world, will be greeted by the righteous or seized by the wicked, depends entirely on the sort of life it has led in this world. If it wins beatitude, it is on its own merits; if it loses this, it is equally through its own fault. If it ascends to heaven, it is owing to its righteous life in this world; if it sinks into hell, it is due to its wicked life here.

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

The Bridge of Judgment. When man began to people the heavens with the celestial beings and came to the belief that the dead go heavenward, he naturally began to think of the means to scale the heights. Nature often showed the beautiful rainbow spanning the space between the earth and the sky in glorious colours, and the shining Milky Way paving its circular path with silvery stars. With the development of the eschatological ideas,

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

the Egyptians believed that the souls of the dead lived in the starry regions which were generally reached by means of a huge ladder.¹⁰

We are given in figurative language by Zarathushtra the image of a bridge, called Chinvat [Chinwad], literally 'of the dividing one', that connects this world with the unseen world, and serves as a medium to cross the deep chasm that separates the two. The reckoning of the good or evil deeds of the souls takes place after [104] death,¹¹ and judgment is passed upon them before they can cross the bridge. The souls fare here as is their due. The righteous souls come to this place in pious expectation of the reward that awaits them. Zarathushtra helps those righteous souls to cross the Bridge who have devoutly practised his religion.¹² But the wicked souls, who have estranged themselves from the Path of Righteousness by their own evil thoughts, words, and deeds, stand trembling at this judgment span.¹³ Writhing with the pangs of their conscience and crying words of woe, they are now led by their own conscience to perdition.¹⁴

11. [Y31.14.](#)
12. [Y46.10.](#)
13. [Y51.13.](#)
14. [Y31.20;](#) [46.11.](#) >

HEAVEN

Abode of the righteous after death. The sharp antithesis that existed between the righteous and the wicked in the material world finds its counterpart in the spiritual world. The righteous in this world formed *ashahyâ gaethâ*, 'World of Righteousness,' as against the *dregvants* who belonged to the world of wickedness. The place reserved for the pious souls that approach heaven is called *garo demana* [Garothman], 'Abode of song.' Ahura Mazda first entered this home of the blessed ones and Zarathushtra has promised that the faithful of all times will win admission to it through thinking good thoughts and practising righteousness.¹⁵ The prophet says that he will sing praise unto Ahura Mazda in such a manner that it will be heard all along the path leading to Garo Demana.¹⁶ He will carry the dutiful homage of his own and of his followers unto Ahura Mazda to his resplendent House of Song.¹⁷ Here the pious souls are surrounded by choirs of celestial beings. Those who win fair report of their lives in this world, live in the happy lodgings of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, and Asha.¹⁸ We have already seen that paradise itself comes to be known by the name of Good Thought or Best Thought. In one instance this region of felicity and bliss is called *vangheuh demana manangho*, 'Abode of Good mind.'¹⁹ Ahura Mazda with his heavenly host, and the souls of the righteous ones, live here. He will welcome King Vishtaspa and other friends of the faith [105] who have helped Zarathushtra in his mission, to live with him in the same abode.²⁰

15. [Y51.15.](#)
16. [Y50.4.](#)
17. [Y45.8.](#)
18. [Y30.10.](#)
19. [Y32.15.](#)
20. [Y46.14.](#)

The nature of reward in heaven. The blessed ones now enter into felicity. To the pious souls Ahura Mazda gives the good reward which their goodness has earned.²¹ The fruition of

21. [Y30.11;](#) [Y43.5.](#)
22. [Y46.19.](#)

paradise belongs to them. Those who have helped the prophet in his great work are rewarded in the spiritual world.²² There the righteous enjoy felicity in immortality.²³ Zarathushtra prays for long life of blessed existence in the Kingdom of Mazda,²⁴ and seeks to know his soul will reap the good that will rejoice it.²⁵ The good leave a good name and fame behind them on earth, and attain reward in the abode of Ahura Mazda, Vohu Manah, and Asha.²⁶ The weal of the blessed ones in heaven knows not any woe; it is the lasting happiness which is never followed by misery, and the bliss is without alloy, for the riches of Vohu Manah are everlasting.²⁷ Earthly happiness is fleeting, it may be supplanted by misery at the very moment that man thinks himself most secure in its enjoyment. The joy of life may at any moment be eclipsed by a passing cloud of sorrow; but the heavenly bliss is abiding, knowing no end, and having no pain in its train. It is the highest blessing of life, says Zarathushtra, which Mazda will give for ever and aye to all those who are the faithful followers of his excellent religion.²⁸

- 23. [Y45.7](#); [Y51.8, 9](#).
- 24. [Y43.13](#).
- 25. [Y44.8](#).
- 26. [Y30.10](#).
- 27. [Y28.8](#).
- 28. [Y53.1](#).

INTERMEDIARY PLACE OF REWARDS

Between heaven and hell. We learn from Pahlavi works that an intermediary place, situated between earth and the star-region, is reserved for the souls in whose case the records of what may be called the Book of Life show that their good deeds are on a par with their evil deeds. The strict logic of the doctrine of Zoroastrian eschatology and the symmetry of the entire system demand a place where the souls whose good and evil deeds exactly balance and who cannot ascend to heaven because of the heaviness of their sins, and yet are not so weighed down by [106] sin as to descend into hell, and find their resting-place till the final judgment. The Avestan and Pahlavi texts record in full detail this eschatological doctrine, while the Gathas appear to recognize either in spirit or in the abstract, so that we may be justified in concluding that the concept of the intermediate place was embodied in the teachings of Zarathushtra from the beginning.²⁹ Whoso wavers between good and evil through his unsteady thoughts, words, and deeds will in the end find his place in intermediate region.³⁰

- 29. Cf. [Y33.1](#); [48.4](#), Bartholomae in ZDMG. 35. 157, 158; Roth, *ib.* 37. 223-229; Geldner, *Aus dem Avesta* in KZ. 30. 530.
- 30. [Y48.4](#).

HELL

The wicked are consigned to perdition. In contradistinction to the Best Existence, the abode of sinners after death is *achishta ahu*, 'Worst Existence.'³¹ The region of hell is called *drujo dem&acird;na*, 'Abode of Wickedness,³² or *achishtahyâ demâna manangho*, 'Abode of the Worst Mind.'³³ Darkness is the characteristic trait of the inferno.³⁴

- 31. [Y30.4](#).
- 32. [Y46.11](#); [49.11](#); [51.14](#).
- 33. [Y32.13](#).
- 34. [Y31.20](#).

The nature of retribution in hell. The Gathic texts casually mention that torment and woe, punishment and sorrow, fall to the

- 35. [Y30.8, 11](#); [31.14, 15, 20](#); [43.5](#); [44.19](#); [45.3, 7](#); [49.4](#); [51.8](#).

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

9; [53.7](#).

36. [Y31.20](#); [49.11](#); [53.6](#).

37. [Y31.20](#).

Duration of punishment in hell. The Gathas speak of the punishment as lasting for a long period.³⁸ The idea of eternal [107] damnation, that is confinement in hell, until the day of Renovation, which is markedly manifest in the later works, exists in embryo in the Gathas. A passage expressly speaks of the misery of the wicked souls as lasting for all time.³⁹

38. [Y30.11](#); [31.20](#).

39. [Y46.11](#).

[108]

CHAPTER XII

THE FINAL DISPENSATION

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

1. [Y43.5](#); [51.6](#).

2. [Y43.6](#).

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

3. [Y48.12](#).

4. [Y46.3](#).

5. [Y45.11](#).

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

7. [Y30.9](#).

and says that whosoever shall do the will of God, is like a brother and sister and mother unto him who is the *oikodespotes* 'Lord of the House' and Saviour.⁶ To be as worthy as these saviours who [109] bring about the furtherance of the world and to be the perfectors of the world, themselves, is the devout prayer of the faithful.⁷

Universal Judgment. All human souls will be subjected to a collective judgment before the ultimate renovation of the world. The souls will have to undergo the great ordeal by fire and molten metal, to which reference has already been made.⁸ At the time of the final Dispensation Ahura Mazda will judge the souls of the righteous and the wicked by the test of his blazing fire.⁹ The powerful fire will be a manifest help unto the holy, but harmful unto the wicked.¹⁰ Asha and Armaiti will help Ahura Mazda at the final judgment.¹¹ Mazda knows best how to mark out the lost sinners at the final ordeal of the molten metal.¹² This tribulation will reclaim the sinners.¹³

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

The later texts give us a systematic account of the final struggle between the good and the evil powers, and relate in detail how every one of the heavenly beings will smite his own particular opponent evil spirit. As we have already seen, the Gathas speak of the victory of Asha, or Righteousness, and the defeat of Druj, Wickedness. The fate of Angra Mainyu, the father of evil, is not mentioned; but we can infer that once the [110] law of Wickedness perishes, its originator must be impotent; in other words, the final defeat of Druj signifies also the defeat of the arch-Druj Angra Mainyu.

The Kingdom of Righteousness; man's share in its inauguration. In the higher sphere of life man is taught to go out from within himself and do active work for others. The truly

8. [Y51.9.](#)

9. [Y31.3, 19;](#) [43.4;](#) [47.6.](#)

10. [Y34.4.](#)

11. [Y47.6.](#)

12. [Y32.7.](#)

13. [Y47.6.](#)

righteous person does not live for himself alone, but holds out his own life for the ransom of others. Man may not rest with working for the salvation of his individual soul; he has equally to strive for the, saving of the collective soul, the soul of all humanity. Every year that he lives in this world he has to render some distinct social service and further the sum total of human joy and happiness: every day that he enjoys the infinite blessings of Ahura Mazda he has to give his mite in the furtherance of the cause of goodness. Human society is a great family, and no single member can live for himself. No act of the individual can be so personal that it does not affect the other members of the group or influence them in some way or another. Every one has to work for all. The individual is an important incident in society, a dutiful member of the world of humanity if he works for it; but an undesirable burden and a superfluous impediment to society if he selfishly lives for himself.

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

14. [Y43.1.](#)

Various, as we know, are the motives which serve men as incentive in their work. Some work for the applause of their fellow-beings, some for the posthumous name and fame, while still others do some good work in the hope of some reward in this or the next world. If a man abstains from evil it may be owing to the dread of public censure or to the fear of incurring the [111] divine vengeance and future retribution; but the truly righteous one practises righteousness for its own sake. As the patriot who is guided by the noblest of human sentiments lives and dies for his country, so the *ashavan* acts in promoting the divine Kingdom of Righteousness.

Each age has its ideals, religious and social; and they vary in accordance with the high or low grades of civilization, of its peoples. The establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness is the one universal ideal, which knows no change. Ahura Mazda will bring about the renovation of the world in accordance with his divine will¹⁵ The whole universe moves towards the realization of this state of perfection, and humanity evolves towards this ideal. The righteous at all times help to bring this great event nearer by their deeds, even though the onward march may be beset with obstacles, and progress at times may be retarded, yet it can never be wholly arrested. Occasionally it may

15. [Y34.15.](#)

seem to swing back, but on the whole its move is onward along the path. If progress and evolution seem to be slow, the faithful need not despair. In the course of eternity Ahura Mazda has ample time to finish the work with the cooperation of the children of men. Human beings that form a society at a given period in the endless chain of Boundless Time have to give their respective share in the furthering of this great work. If society suffers for the faults of its units, it is because the individuals are human; out even these faults and these sufferings turn out to be incentives for the sure and steady work of advancement. Zarathushtra is the first to give meaning to human history. There is the great design, the stupendous purpose, the onward march towards making a new world, a perfect world. Progress is the Zoroastrian watchword. Man's birth is an ascent to the state of final perfection. Each individual has to join hands with the rest of his fellows in this great and noble undertaking; he must work to the extent of his powers and lend his aid, no matter how insignificant, to the attainment of the ideal end. Man need not feel appalled by the narrowness of the sphere in which he can labour nor must he be staggered at the vastness of the work to be done. The individual life should add something to the sum total of the life of humanity. Everyone has to consecrate his life to the good of humanity. It is a stage in which [112] everyone feels sympathy for his neighbour and helps everyone else. This is the common aim that knits together all men that have visited this earth since creation began, and must equally unite for all time those that will inhabit it up to the end of existence. The eternal conflict aims at the universal. Individuals in all ages have to work to accomplish this great end. Each generation profits by the work done in the past, makes some infinitesimal advance and adds its own share to the inherited legacy; thus handing it down to posterity in a better and a higher condition than that in which it received this inheritance. At last, by the constant efforts of the ages and the accumulated work of humanity, the desired object will be secured. Every effort made in this direction is a step upward gained on the ladder leading to the ultimate goal.

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

[113]

THE AVESTAN PERIOD

FROM ABOUT 800 B. C. TO ABOUT A. D. 200
AT THE LATEST

[114 is blank]

[115]

CHAPTER XIII

INDIA LEAVES INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION BEHIND

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

The Brahmins officiated at the sacrifices and conducted religious services for the laity. They propitiated and placated gods with libations and sacrifices and penances to win magical power. When the Vedic language and literature became antiquated, the Brahmins interpreted and amplified the ancient texts. Thus arose the Brahmanas dealing with sacrificial texts based on the authority of the Vedas. The Vedic poets had weaved religious thought in the garb of beautiful lyrical poetry. Their descendants were now preoccupied in formulating elaborate ceremonials and sacrificial rites. Symbolical significance was attached to their punctilious performance. Rites and ceremonies [116] came to be

invested with mysterious power to secure for the donor his heart's desires. Words specifically arranged and recited in a specific manner were believed to have magical potency and were supposed to heal disease, to win the favour of gods, to rout the demons, to frustrate the evil scheming of enemies and to cause them harm. The power of sacrifices was equally great. The gods, it is said, were originally mortals and dreaded death, but later won immortality by sacrifices. Sacrifice, it is added, enables the Brahmans to compel the gods to do their will. Ritualism thus rose to a pre-eminent position. Burnt offerings and sacrifices were believed to procure earthly gifts and heavenly bliss and to raise the estate of the soul in the next world. Exhortations for moral life continued to be made, yet elaborate ritual and animal sacrifices became the central feature of religion.

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

But there were some persons of a deep devotional disposition whom dreary ritualism and magical incantations which superseded a religion of morality, did not satisfy and they yearned for higher personal religious experience. They longed for passionately plunging into the life of the spirit. Such persons aspired to live religion in their own persons, to approximate the object of their devotion, to see their God face to face, to commune with him, and to lay bare their souls before him. They aimed at leading the life of the spirit, but the spirit was encased in a fleshy frame, and the flesh seemed to them to be antagonizing the spirit. Beneath their calm exterior, they often experienced the tempest raging within and their inner world torn by the conflict. Evil thoughts and vicious passions forced themselves into the mind and tortured it. Their one paramount function, they concluded, was to quell the tumult of their physical nature, before they could embark upon spiritual progress. They betook themselves to ascetic practice~ to drill and discipline, control and subdue their unruly bodies. They left their homes and retired to the forests. They practised various kinds of austerities, [117] flagellated themselves, emaciated, tortured, and mortified their bodies by rigorous devices. They laboured to induce ecstatic state by fasting, vigil, and use of narcotics, as aspirants to magical power have been known to do from primitive times. The austerities and devotional exercises of some advanced ascetic monks, known by the name of Shramanas, excited great admiration and reverence of the people. Even gods, it is alleged, gained their supernatural power by practising

austerities. They were mortals originally, say the Atharva Veda and the Brahmanas, and austerities enabled them to defy death. Sages and saints attained miraculous power by the same means. Manu speaks of the practice of austerities as the best means of purifying one's life. By the close of the Vedic period, life was divided into four stages, being those of discipleship, householdership, hermitage, and renunciation. The great legislator lays down that when a householder finds his skin wrinkled and his hair grown gray and witnesses sons born to his sons, he should give up his possessions, wear a tattered garment, resort to the forest, and fare on what grows in the forest or beg his food in adjoining villages. There he should practise austerities and concentrate his mind on Brahma. The ascetic ideal rose in great esteem. People whose lives were saddened with sorrow and suffering, those of highly emotional nature who were extremely sensitive to the jars and buffets of life, those who were temperamentally subject to intense alternating elation and depression, or those in the autumn of their lives who were anxious for their spiritual edification, severed all ties with their families and the busy world and returned to the forest solitudes. The cloister attracted recluses from all grades of society. King Janaka renounced his throne in old age and became a hermit.

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

Philosophy has generally led its distinctive existence as a parallel attempt of man to think out for himself the eternal verities of life, which religion has claimed to impart through divine revelation. Religion has acknowledged it as an aid in its [118] need or as a handmaid to amplify and elucidate its preachings. Philosophers have stood as a class by themselves. Their systems of thought have been recognized as the results of concentrated thinking on the problems of existence, or as the findings of human reason. Philosophy has from its earliest days been regarded in Greece as a secular attempt of the human mind to solve the riddles of life. India, on the other hand, has classed all such thinkers as one group of seers, sages, or prophets and held the utterance of every thinker as inspired. The unknown Vedic seer who sings of the water as the germ of life in the hymn of creation is giving expression to revealed truth, whereas Thales of Miletus, who declares water as the first principle, speaks in terms of cosmogonic philosophy. Kapila's great Sankhya system of numbers is enshrined for all time as divinely vouchsafed. When his Greek contemporary, Pythagoras, preaches that number is the first principle of the world, he passes as a lay thinker grafting his

metaphysics on numbers.

With the advent of the great thinkers who weave their metaphysical speculations into creative systems of philosophy, higher religion in India tends to be philosophical religion, and metaphysical speculation becomes religious philosophy. The philosophical religion thus propounded by the great thinkers is embodied in the Upanishads. These Upanishads are appendices to Brahmanas and represent the essence of higher Brahmanism. They set aside the Vedic gods. The supreme God of the Brahmanic period was Prajapati or Brahma, a personal god like the various gods of the Vedic pantheon. The Upanishads replace this father-god by the impersonal world-soul. They teach the principle of divine immanence. Personality implies the existence of another, as an 'I' to a 'thee.' It is limitation. According to the thinkers, nothing exists outside of Brahma; all is Brahma. They teach idealistic monism. Brahma is the only reality, all else is illusion. The individual self is a mere reflex of the Self or Brahma. It is identical with the universal Self. It is due to ignorance and illusion that this fundamental truth is not recognized. It is knowledge that leads the individual to discover for himself that the outward Brahma and his inner self are one and the same. Man had always extolled God and humiliated himself. God was infinite when man was finite. God was all powerful, man was a weakling. God was king and man was his subject. [119] Man looked to God with awe and reverence. He bowed before him, and prayed with folded arms and on bended knees. The Indian mystic philosopher is daring in his intercourse with the divine. He claims intimacy and identity with God, nay, he hails himself God, and assures every human being of potential divinity. When knowledge dawns upon man he can acclaim with sublime ecstasy, 'I am Brahma.' Man thus becomes God. and the supreme function of philosophy is to raise man to his proper estate by means of knowledge. Divinity sleeps in man, it has to be awakened. Man is God in the making and knowledge makes him God. In its keen insight into the mystery of existence, its scientific value of philosophical thinking, its boldness of conception, this all-absorbing monism has no equal in the history of philosophy. Brahma, as the apex of existence, is the acme of metaphysical speculation. But being nameless, colourless, and lifeless, it denies definition and defies description. It demands that man shall speak of it in negation only, but better still not speak at all. It is an impersonal neuter abstraction, a phantom god in the world of shadowy reality, a god who is no god.

But the human heart hungers for a God who is a thinking and willing being, a personal God who can hear man's prayers, who can bestow gifts, who can fulfil hopes, who can guide man on the highway of life, who can protect him from harm, who can award merit, who can punish wrong, who can forgive man's trespasses, who can replenish life when it seems hollow and empty, who can

brighten it with gleams of sunshine when it seems dark and dreary, who can sustain man when he is downcast, in whom he can find strength in his weakness, before whom he can lay his troubles, upon whom he can lean in his loneliness, in whom he can find refuge when the world seems to fail him, who can console the heavy-hearted, who can heal the bruised and bleeding heart, who can wipe away the tears of those that weep their lives out, and who can respond to the human call whenever and from wherever it comes and whatever it may be.

The philosophers thus dispensed with gods, but they persisted nonetheless. Like the rise and fall of kings and dynasties, old gods were forgotten, forsaken, but new ones simultaneously succeeded them. The sacred texts habitually explain and accommodate new gods by depicting one as incarnating himself in the person of another or by declaring a new god as being identical [120] with the old one. Rudra, for example is seen resenting the treatment accorded him. The supreme Adorable One pacifies him by saying that homage paid to one was equivalent to that given to another, for they were both one and the same. When Bhagavat or Vasudeva rises to be the supreme God in the fourth century B.C., Brahma and Shiva are declared to be his creations and are relegated to subordinate positions to carry out the will of the new god. Similarly when Brahmanism later absorbed the cult of Bhagavat, Vishnu, the sun god who was popular at the period, became the supreme God. Thus did the generality of mankind find that they could not live without personal gods and kindly gods did not desert them to their fate.

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

Whole-hearted love of God and duty selflessly performed in the name of God, dedicating one's actions to the glory of God, win deliverance for man — such is the message of the Gita. Rituals, concentration of thought, and disciplinary ascetic practices are aids to the life of devotion or love for God. Love for God leads man to know him better and teaches him to do his deeds, leaving

their outcome to God. Those who know Krishna are freed from the binding nature of actions. Those who piously seek and find refuge in him are absolved of their sins. Faith, love, and resignation in him sustain man in this life and open for him, after his death, a life of felicity in loving fellowship with God.

New gods thus replaced the old Indo-Iranian gods. The [121] evolution of religious thought in India made such a comprehensive and revolutionary advancement upon Indo-Iranian religion, that it gave an altogether different form to the religions that originated during the millennium.

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

Such is the philosophy of life propounded by the leading thinkers of India by the sixth century B.C. It becomes the standard philosophy for all time and generally leaves its indelible impression upon the subsequent religious and philosophical thought in India. With the exception of some materialistic systems of philosophy of the type of the Charvaka which taught pure Hedonism, the various schools of thought generally agreed in their [122] estimate of life upon earth as a life of woe. Buddha and Mahavira, who founded their great religions at short intervals

during the sixth century B.C., had their minds saturated with the pessimistic view of man's life upon earth; The one great thinker whose teachings exerted lasting influence upon Buddha was Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya philosophy. It was the dictum of the Sankhya system, that existence was suffering. What men considered pleasure was pain in disguise. Life was pain.

Buddha lays down with greater emphasis than ever before that life is suffering. There is no cure for the world-ache. The world is irremediable and not to be born in it is the only escape from suffering. Life, says Buddha, is steeped in sorrow and suffering. Pleasure is gilded pain. Joy is veiled sorrow. Birth is sorrow. Age is sorrow. Wealth is sorrow. Sickness is sorrow. Death is sorrow. Union with the unpleasant is sorrow. Separation from the pleasant is sorrow. Desire for life is sorrow. Ungratified desire is sorrow. The tears, he adds, that the weary wayfarers have shed upon their pilgrimages upon earth make a vaster expanse of water than the waters of all the oceans upon the earth. Just as the ocean has only one taste of salt so, it is said, Buddha's teachings have but one taste, deliverance from suffering. The comprehension of the origin and nature of this suffering and the knowledge of the path that leads to its cessation bring freedom from birth and death. Life is suffering and Buddha's mission is to preach the gospel of deliverance from it.

The philosophy of escape from life. There are occasions in the lives of all human beings when they think they cannot adapt themselves to the world around them. Hard facts of life seem to press very heavily upon them and they seek diverse means to lighten the burden. Some like to forget their environments and seek seclusion in out of the way places far from society, where they can feel happy to be alone in the company of nature. They crave the joy of solitude where they can lose themselves in the soliloquy of their own thoughts. Men with literary leanings read so that they may forget themselves for a time and transplant themselves into other environments. Society's baseness revolts some who long to strip themselves bare of the trappings of civilization and escape to the freedom of primitive simplicity. Morbidity drives some to seek isolation from society. Despair and distress drive others to seek refuge in a world of dreams, where [123] they can forget the hard realities of life, and live awhile with their fancies and dreams in the atmosphere created by their own imagination. They like to retreat within themselves, seeking the protection of the inner life against the torments of outer life. Here they fondly delude themselves to ascribe reality to their visions and dreams. They people the world with their own thoughts, make it after their likes and dislikes. It gives them some comfort to live awhile in the world of illusion. Many find occasional reverie soothing. The soothing thoughts of the dream-land of their creation help them to forget the trying reality and

lull to sleep the burning fever of the tortured brain. Men of philosophic bent of mind seek to escape the sordid realities of life by retiring into a world of mysticism to live in the atmosphere of otherworldliness.

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

Prince Arjuna is grieved at the painful duty his position in life entails upon him to fight his kinsmen. When he witnesses the contending armies drawn up on the battlefield, he is struck with sudden compunction and appalled at the prospect of the impending slaughter of his kinsfolk. He hesitates to plunge into the battle array. God Krishna manifests himself in human form in the person of his charioteer to relieve him from his embarrassment. On no account can the prince shirk his inevitable duty, urges Krishna, even if its performance forces him to wade his way to the throne through the blood of his relations. Man cannot escape his duty in life. He cannot compass his retreat before the actions that fall to his lot.

Life without actions is unthinkable. One has only to do his work in such a manner that he may maintain complete detachment from the consequence of his actions. Dispassionate and disinterested performance of actions does not fetter the doer. Thus, says Krishna, he acts himself, for the world would perish if he ceased to work. The multifarious actions that he performs do [124] not entail upon him the necessity of going the round of existences because his actions are selfless and directed to the good of mankind. Action, he says, is better than inaction and he adds that immunity from action can be had by action alone. Action should be for the sake of accomplishing it and not for its resulting rewards. Man has to perform his duty zealously in whatever station of life he may happen to be. He has to be utterly indifferent and unmindful of the fruits of his actions. Or better still, says Krishna, he should do his deeds in the name of his God and for him, and dedicate all his activity to the glory of God.

Ignorance is the penalty that the soul pays when it enters the body. The senses introduce it to the fleeting show of the world. The mind broods over the objects and is drawn in attachment to them. Attachment gives rise to desire which is insatiable like fire. As long as man is swayed by desire, he drifts like a ship that is tossed upon the waves by stormy winds. Desire, wrath, and greed are the threefold entrance to hell. By regulating and controlling the senses, man secures the tranquillity of thought and knowledge. His tranquillity of mind should be such as to remain

undisturbed like a flame that is sheltered from the wind and flickers not. He should be temperate in food and sleep, work, and rest. As the tortoise draws its head and feet within its shell, so should he be withdrawn from the outer world of senses and, retiring to a secluded spot, think and meditate deeply upon God. When he has attained this state Of devotional exaltation, a clod of earth and a lump of gold become of equal worth unto him. Joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and failure, censure and praise, good and evil, friend and foe are all alike unto him and he is unaffected by the pairs of opposites. Happiness is quiescence and life's goal is its attainment.

The inherent evil nature of matter, however, remains characteristic of all Indian thinking. The human body continues to be regarded as the root of evil. The moralists teach the strengthening of the spirit by breaking the body and the ascetic ideal of life is highly esteemed.

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

[125]

CHAPTER XIV

IRAN GOES BACK TO INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION

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

The stronghold of Zarathushtra's religion was Eastern Iran. His religion was a reform of the primitive faith of the Iranians. But the reform did not last long, owing to the counter-reformation that followed his death. The excellence of his highly ethical

1. [Yt10.92.](#)

religion was indelibly imprinted on the minds of the cultured classes, but it had not reached the masses. They could not comprehend the abstract ideas of the new prophet, whereas they found it easy to invoke Mithra and his heavenly associates with elaborate rituals and sacrifices. Their veneration for these older divinities, now in exile, had not ceased. They viewed the movement of the revival of the Indo-Iranian faith with great favour. The leaders of the Zoroastrian Church, on the other hand, were alarmed at this growing tendency to go back to the pre-Zarathushtrian faith. They sought a compromise. A great religious syncretism then took place, with the result that the successors of [126] the prophet were obliged to accommodate the Indo-Iranian divinities in the divine household of Ahura Mazda. Mithra was the most popular divinity at the period in Western Iran from where his cult, as we shall see later, passed on to Europe. It is expressly said that Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas were pleased with his religion and accepted it, and Ahura Mazda conferred upon him the chieftainship of the world,¹ Mithra and his co-workers were made to give their allegiance to Ahura Mazda and to agree to work as the satraps in his divine kingdom. The [Yashts](#) or hymns dedicated to the several Yazatas open with the declaration that they are created by Ahura Mazda. Mithra is created by Ahura Mazda. The Yasht composed in honour of the angel Verethraghna, begins with the acknowledgment that Verethraghna is *Ahura-dhâta*, 'created by Ahura (Mazda).' In return, Mithra and his old compatriots secured the privilege of sharing the homage and adoration of mankind with their heavenly sovereign Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda and his six spiritual attributes were now openly recognized as seven impersonations of the cardinal virtues of Ahura Mazda, and were given a class designation, Amesha Spentas or the Holy Immortals. These Amesha Spentas were given the first rank in the divine hierarchy and the Indo-Iranian divinities and those of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian origin were classed under the epithet Yazata or Adorable One, and assigned a second place in the divine hierarchy. The Amesha Spentas are thus the archangels and Yazatas the angels in the newly formed Zoroastrian pantheon.

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

present day, as we shall see in subsequent pages.

[127] **The Gathic view of life persists.** When the ascetic ideal of life became so widespread in and outside India, it is natural that people of despairing disposition may be drawn to it. There were, it seems, some small sects or brotherhoods in Iran that embraced this view of life. It is evidently of some such sect that the Vendidad² speaks with disapproval. Apart from such sporadic instances, the ascetic ideal of life is foreign to the Later Avesta. The exhortations of the prophet about the prime importance of a physically strong and sound body to enable man to combat evil, to fight the imperfections of the world, and to work strenuously for the regeneration of mankind, are faithfully embodied in the Younger Avesta. Self-control and discipline of the body rather than austerity and self-mortification remain the ideal. Strong and hardy men and women of rugged virtues bred of bodily cleanliness, bodily purity, bodily health, and bodily soundness are praised with unabated zeal. The view of life remains as optimistic and cheerful as propounded by Zarathushtra. The inborn craving of all human beings to obtain pleasurable states of feeling or happiness for themselves is fully recognized. The devout yearn for happiness that they can find in a temperate enjoyment of the good things of life. The gloomy view of life which the Indian cousins have now embraced is unknown to the Iranians. Life is still joy.

Ahura Mazda has created joy-giving lands for mankind.³ Three of the many names of Ahura Mazda are: All Happiness, Full Happiness, and Lord of Happiness.⁴ He has created happiness for mankind.⁵ He is himself abundant joy.⁶ Ahura Mazda has created joy, happiness, and pleasure of Haurvatat, the archangel presiding over weal.⁷ Adoration of Ahura Mazda by day and by night, bring him and Sraosha and waters and trees and the Fravashis unto the faithful for their joy.⁸ The householders pray that joy and happiness may never leave their houses.⁹ They prayerfully ask that their minds be full of joy.¹⁰ Ahura Mazda is invoked to give joy and happiness.¹¹ Zarathushtra invokes his blessings upon King Vishtaspa that he may be as full of happiness as Raman, the genius of joy.¹² Abundant happiness comes to him to whom the Kingly Glory cleaves.¹³ Mithra gives full [128] happiness to his votaries,¹⁴ and the faithful invoke him to come for their joy.¹⁵ The angels presiding over fire and waters are invoked to give great happiness and life of joy.¹⁶ Atar is invoked to bestow joy upon the faithful.¹⁷ The Fravashis of the righteous give happiness.¹⁸ Airyaman is implored to come for the joy of men and women who faithfully follow Zarathushtra.¹⁹ The entire creation that imparts weal unto mankind is invoked.²⁰ Ardvi Sura gives good abodes and joyful abodes and enduring abodes unto all Mazda-worshipping families.²¹ Tishtrya prospers joyful and good abodes.²² Mithra blesses the Aryan peoples with

2. [Vd4.47.](#)

3. [Vd1.1.](#)

4. [Yt1.14.](#)

5. [Y21.4](#)

6. [Y1.1.](#)

7. [Yt4.1.](#)

8. [Yt1.9](#)

9. [Y60.1. 7.](#)

10. [Y60.11.](#)

11. [Y35.4.](#)

12. [Yt23.7; 24.6.](#)

13. [Yt19.54.](#)

14. [Yt10.33, 65, 108.](#)

15. [Yt10.5](#)

; [Ny2.14.](#)

16. [Y62.1, 4, 10; 68.2, 11;](#)

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

[Yt5.26; Ny5.10.](#)

17. [Y58.7.](#)

18. [Yt13.32.](#)

19. [Y54.1; Vd20.11.](#)

20. [Vd19.37.](#)

21. [Y68.14.](#)

22. [Yt8.2.](#)

23. [Yt10.4; Ny2.13.](#)

24. [Yt10.77.](#)

25. [Yt10.33.](#)

26. [Yt5.26, 98.](#)

26. [Ny5.10.](#)

27. [Yt19.54.](#)

28. [Y60.3.](#)

29. [Y62.4, 5; Ny5.10, 11.](#)

30. [Y62.10, Ny3.10; 5.16.](#)

31. [Y60.7.](#)

32. [Y41.4.](#)

33. [Yt10.33, 108.](#)

34. [Y68.11.](#)

35. [Y9.19.](#)

36. [Y13.135.](#)

[129]

CHAPTER XV

PROMULGATION OF THE FAITH OF ZARATHUSHTRA

The Avestan people. The races that formed the Zoroastrian fold were the Bactrians, the Medes, and the Persians, who successively rose to political independence in Ancient Iran. The Bactrians of the Northeast, the Medians of the Northwest, and the Persians of the Southwest, were politically welded into one Persian nation, under the Achaemenian empire. This process of

blending these different peoples into one homogeneous nation under the creed of Zoroaster was completed by the time of the of Persia by Alexander the Great.

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

1. [Yt13.99, 100.](#)

2. [Y8.7.](#)

3. [Yt16.17.](#)

Athravans, the Zoroastrian priests of Eastern Iran. The generic name for priest in the Avestan texts is *âthravan*, derived from *âtar*, 'fire.' It corresponds to the Skt. *atharvan*, the fire-priest of the Indo-Iranian period. The atharvan, it is said, twirled Agni or fire and, like Prometheus, brought it from the [130] sky to the earth.⁴ Nature hails Zarathushtra at his birth as an athravan.⁵ He is the very first and foremost of the athravans.⁶ Even Ahura Mazda himself takes this term to define one of his own innumerable names.⁷ Like their Vedic bretheren, the Avestan people divided their society into different professional groups; and the athravans formed the first of them. Fire was their special charge, and it was their special duty to tend the sacred flame in the shrines, and also to go abroad preaching the religion of Mazda.⁸

4. RV.6.16.13.

5. [Yt13.94.](#)

6. [Yt13.88, 89.](#)

7. [Yt1.12.](#)

8. [Y42.6.](#)

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

The earliest mention of the Persians is made in the Assyrian

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

Not long after the death of Vishtaspa, the royal patron of Zarathushtra, the Kingly Glory left the eastern line of the Iranian kings and thus flew to the west. With the shifting of the political sphere of influence, the centre of religious authority [131] gravitated towards the west. Ragha, hereafter, became the pontifical seat of the descendants of the prophet. The temporal and spiritual power here was vested in the chief pontiff of the Zoroastrian world.⁹ Religious influence radiated from this ecclesiastical centre, and the Magian neighbours, who formed the priestly caste among the Medo-Persians, were probably the first to imbibe the new Ideas and gradually to spread them among the peoples Western Iran.

The Achaemenian empire was made up of various nationalities of diverse faiths, and the rulers were always tolerant towards the religions of these subject races. Guided by political expediency, they often built or restored the temples of alien peoples, and occasionally even honoured the Jewish, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek divinities.¹⁰ Cyrus ordered the restoration of temple at Jerusalem,¹¹ and Darius, the devout worshipper of Auramazda, favoured its rebuilding as decreed by Cyrus.¹² According to the Babylonian inscriptions, Cyrus restored the gods of Sumer and Akkad to their former temples, from which they had been brought out by Nabuna'id, the last native ruler of Babylon. He returned the captive gods of Kutu to their home and rebuilt their temples.¹³ Cyrus was the shepherd and the anointed of Yahweh in Judea,¹⁴ he was the chosen of Marduk in Babylon. Darius is called the son of the goddess Neit of Sais in an Egyptian inscription at Tell el-Maskhutah.¹⁵ Cambyses, according to an Egyptian inscription on a naophoric statue preserved in the Vatican, ordered the purification of the desecrated temple of Neit at Sais, and paid homage to the goddess.¹⁶ In a Greek inscription Darius reproved his satrap Gadatas for the reverential attitude toward Apollo.¹⁷

The religion of the Achaemenians. Zarathushtra's new religion took time to penetrate into Western Iran, and, in absence of any data, we are not in a position to say how far Cyrus and [132] his people were influenced by it. It is safe to surmise that they practised some form of Indo-Iranian religion, with Mithra, who

9. [Y19.18.](#)

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

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

12. Ezra 6.1-15.

13. *Cylinder Inscription*, 32-35.

14. Is.44.28; 45.1.

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

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

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

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

19. Bh. 1.5-9, 13, 14, 18, 19; 2.20, 25-31, 33, 35; 3.36, 38, 41, 42, 45, 46; 4.50, 52, 54, 56-59.

was steadily rising in influence, as perhaps the regnant divine power. Darius and his successors were ardent Mazda-worshippers. These Achaemenian kings most devoutly ascribe all their greatness and success to Auramazda, Av. Ahura Mazda. The [Old Persian Inscriptions](#) speak of him as the greatest of the divinities.¹⁸ Darius says with fervent piety that Auramazda made him king and enabled him to hold his vast kingdom firm. Everything that the king did or every glory that he achieved was by the will of Auramazda. Every battle that he won and every army of the enemy that he routed was by the grace of Auramazda.¹⁹ Xerxes zealously imitates his illustrious father and attributes everything of his to Auramazda, and invokes his protection for himself and his empire.²⁰ It is again Auramazda who brought the kingdom to Artaxerxes III.²¹ Though Auramazda is thus the supreme God of the Achaemenians, it seems there were lesser divinities who received their homage. Without using their names, Darius and Xerxes are seen expressing their wish that other gods besides Auramazda may protect their country.²² It is Artaxerxes who speaks of Mithra and Anahita.²³ Herodotus tells us that the Persians did not set up images to gods.²⁴ During the later period, however, Artaxerxes Mnemon first introduced images of gods. He set up the statue of Anahita in Babylon, Susa, Ecbatana, Damascus, and Sardis.²⁵ Arshta, Av. Arshat [Phl. Ashtad], which personifies Rectitude is yet another heavenly being discovered by Foy in the inscriptions and confirmed by Jackson by close examination on the rock.²⁶ Darius says here that he walks according to *arshtâm* or rectitude. With the emphasis that Zarathushtra lays in the Gathas upon Druj, Lie, Wickedness, Darius speaks of *drauga*, Lie, as the embodiment of [133] all evil. It is the Lie that incites his enemies to revolt from him.²⁷ He advises his successor to protect himself from Lie and punish those that lie.²⁸ It was because he did not lie that Auramazda and other gods bore him aid.²⁹ Herodotus informs us that the Persians considered lying as most disgraceful.³⁰ The Gathas and the Later Avesta speak of the Path of Righteousness as the only true path,³¹ or the truest path,³² and Darius exhorts in the same vein not to leave *pathim tyâm râstâm*, 'The Path of Truth,' not to slight the commandments of Auramazda and not to sin.³³⁻³⁴ Closely parallel to [Y37.1](#), which enumerates Ahura Mazda's earthly creation, and [which formula](#) is recited by devout Zoroastrians as [grace before meals](#), the Old Persian Inscriptions state that Auramazda has created this earth, yonder heaven, man, and peace for man.³⁵

The Persians, says Herodotus, sacrificed unto the sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and winds.³⁶ The Magus, we are told, adorned his head-dress with a garland of myrtle and took the sacrificial animal to the highest peak of the mountain. He cut the animal, seethed its flesh, spread it out on a carpet of the tenderest herbage, and consecrated it by chanting sacred texts.³⁷ [The Yasht dedicated to Ardivi Sura Anahita](#) depicts Iranian kings and heroes

62, 63; 5.72, 75; Pers. d. 1-3; e. 2; Nr. a. 1, 3-5; b.1; Elv. 1, Sz. c. 1.

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

21. Pers. a. 1.

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

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

24. Herod. 1.131.

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

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

27. Bh. 4. 4.

28. Bh. 4. 5.

29. Bh. 4. 13.

30. Herod. 1. 138.

31. [Y51.13](#); [72.11](#); [Vd. 4.43](#).

32. [Yt10.3](#).

33-34. Nr. a. 6.

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

36. Herod. 1. 131.

37. Herod. 1. 132.

38. Herod. 7. 43, 53, 54.

sacrificing her a hundred stallions, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand sheep. Herodotus attests to the fact that when Xerxes arrived at Hellespont in his expedition against Greece, he sacrificed a thousand oxen to Athene of Ilium, by which he evidently means Anahita.³⁸ The sculpture on the Tomb of Darius depicts the king reverentially facing fire on the stone altar, and the sun above.

Darius asks the reader of his inscriptions to make them known and not to conceal them. Upon him that carries out his wishes, he invokes his blessings that Auramazda may be his [134] friend, may there be a large family unto him, may he live long, and may all his actions be crowned with success. Whoso, however, acts against the royal wish and keeps back the achievements of the king from the knowledge of the people, unto him, says Darius, Auramazda may not be a friend, he may not be blessed with a large family and long life and fulfilment of his wishes.³⁹ The Later Avesta names the demon of drought Duzhyairya.⁴⁰ and Darius invokes Auramazda and his associates to protect his country from Dushiyar.⁴¹ The inscriptions do not mention Angra Mainyu. We have, however, seen that Darius uses Drauga, Lie, with the emphasis that the Later Avesta puts on Angra Mainyu, and in thus seeing all evil in Drauga instead of in Angra Mainyu, Darius is more faithful to the spirit of the Gathas than the Later Avesta is. It is true that the inscriptions never mention Zarathushtra by name, but they undoubtedly breathe the spirit of his teachings. The royal house of the Achaemenians is a devout Mazda-worshipper at its rise, it imbibes the Zoroastrian cult gradually and is fully Mazdayasnian Zarathushtrian by the time of its downfall.

Magi, the Zoroastrian priesthood of Western Iran. Herodotus tells us that the Magi formed one of the six tribes into which the Medes were divided and constituted their sacerdotal class.⁴² They wore the white robe and covered the head with the woolen tiara with long flaps on each side to, cover the mouth.⁴³ The Median empire was short-lived. Cyrus overthrew Astyages, the last Median king, in 550 B.C. and laid the foundation of the great Achaemenian empire. The Persians thus conquered the earthly possessions of the Medes and the Magi, their priests; but they were in turn conquered by the latter in spirit. The Magian victory in the spiritual domain more than made amends for the loss of their temporal power. The racial jealousy and antagonism between the conquerors and the subdued races, however, continued for a considerable time owing to the Median attempts to regain their ascendancy. When Cambyses heard of the Magian priest Gaumata's revolt to overthrow the Persian empire, he exhorted [135] the people never to let their kingdom fall into the hands of the Medes and the Magi.⁴⁴ Gaumata had destroyed the structures called *âyadanâ*, which the Babylonian version explains

39. [Bh. 4. 10, 11, 16, 17.](#)

40. [Yt8.50-55.](#)

41. [Pers. d. 3.](#)

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

43. Strabo, 15. 3. 15.

44. Herod. 3. 65.

44a. [Bh. 1.64.](#)

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

46. Herod. 1.132.

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

as the houses of gods. Darius restored these temples.^{44a} The anniversary of the day of the Magian usurper's fall, known as *Magophonia*, was observed by the Persians as a great festival, and Herodotus informs us that the Magi kept within their houses on that day.⁴⁵ With the lapse of time, however, the Medes and the Persians became more reconciled to each other. The Magi were the priests of the Medes; they now became the priests of the Persians. This strengthened their position. The classical writers held their names in ancient times as synonymous with the wisdom of the East. Magic and magician are the words reminiscent of their fame; No sacrifices were offered without them.⁴⁶ They accompanied the armies with the sacred fire, kept it burning on the battlefield, and invoked divine help for the victory of the king. Herodotus tells us that the holy chariot drawn by eight white horses followed the armies of Xerxes. The Magi made sacrificial offerings at various stages on the march and prayed for the triumph of the Persian arms, in which the king and the Persian soldiers in the army participated.⁴⁷ They were held in great esteem, and their exalted position at the court of the kings ensured them a considerable influence over the people. They were looked upon as the wise mediators between man and God. They officiated at the ceremonies, chanted the hymns, sacrificed at the altar, explained omens, practised divination, expounded dreams, and ministered to the various religious wants of the people.⁴⁸

It seems that the Magi took a long time to supplant the religious practices of the Persians by their own. The two races differed very widely on some of the main religious observances. For example, the Magi held the elements of nature sacred. The earth was to be kept pure from defilement. Hence they exposed the corpses of the dead to be devoured by birds; though the Persians, on the contrary, enclosed the corpses in wax, and interred [136] them in the earth.⁴⁹ We gather from Arrian that Alexander sent the body of Darius to be interred in the royal mausoleum by the side of the remains of the departed ones of the royal family of Persia.⁵⁰ The Persians continued this practice for a considerable time, until finally with the complete fusion of the two races they seem to have exchanged burial for the exposure of the corpses.

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

48. Herod. 1.107, 108; 7.19, 37.

49. Herod. 1. 140.

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

with the Persians of the west, and their immediate predecessors, the Medes.

The Avestan texts do not recognize the Magi. The forms derived from the term *maga*, 'great' occurring in the Gathas and the Later Avesta do not represent this priestly class. We find a solitary passage, presumably a late interpolation, which pronounces a curse upon those who ill-treat the Magi.⁵¹ We may add a passage in which Ahura Mazda tells Zarathushtra that he prefers a man who has a wife to one who lives as a magus, that is, lives in continence.⁵² The class designation of the priests in the Avestan text is persistently *athraivan*. The disposal of the dead by the exposure to the light of the sun, the reverence for the elements, fire, water, and earth, the stringent laws for bodily cleanliness, the active crusade against noxious creatures, are some of the salient features of the religious practices and beliefs of the Magi that we glean from the writings of the Greek authors. These form the cardinal tenets of the **Vendidad** and are all associated with the *athraivans*, who make up the official priesthood of the Avestan people. It is not a Magus who cleanses the defiled by ablution ceremonials, heals the sick by [137] the recital of the holy spells, and moves about with a *penom* over his mouth, and a *khrafstraghna* in his hand; but it is an *athraivan* who exercises all these powers and more. The sacerdotal class is known by the title of *athraivan* throughout the texts. It is the only privileged priestly class that the Avesta recognizes.

Spread of Zoroastrianism in remote lands. The Zoroastrian missionaries travelled to distant lands for the purpose of promulgating the religion, and their homeward return from their sacred missions is celebrated by the faithful.⁵³ The promulgating zeal on the part of the Zoroastrian priests seems to have provoked opposition from non-believers. Keresani, a powerful ruler of a foreign land, we are informed, prevented the fire-priests of Iran from visiting his country to preach the Zoroastrian doctrines.⁵⁴ In spite of all such obstacles thrown in their way, the Zoroastrian missionaries gradually succeeded in planting the banner of their national faith both near and afar. They wished eagerly to spread abroad between heaven and earth the **Ahuna Vairya**, or the most sacred formula of the Iranian faith, together with the other holy prayers.⁵⁵ Attention has already been called to the fact that the Gathas celebrated the conversion of Fryana the Turanian and his descendants. The Avestan texts include some more Turanian names in the canonical list of sainted persons.⁵⁶ The most illustrious of these Turanian Zoroastrians was Yoisht-i Fryana [Yavisht i Friyan], who sacrificed unto Ardvi Sura and begged of her a boon that he might be able to answer the riddles that the malicious wizard Akhtya put to him.⁵⁷ The boon was granted him,⁵⁸ and the later **Pahlavi treatise** which bears the name of the Turanian saint adds that Yoisht-i Fryana solved the

51. [Y65.7.](#)

52. [Vd4.47.](#)

53. [Y42.6.](#)

54. [Y9.24.](#)

55. [Y61.1.](#)

56. [Yt13.113, 120, 123.](#)

57. [Yt5.81, 82.](#)

58. *Ib.*, 83.

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

60. [Yt13.97.](#)

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

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

enigmas put forth by the wizard who was killing all those who were unable to answer his questions. The saint, in his turn, proposed to Akhtya three riddles, which the wizard was unable to answer. The saint, thereupon, put the sorcerer to death.⁵⁹ The [Fravardin Yasht](#)⁶⁰ commemorates the Fravashi of Saena, an illustrious convert to [138] Zoroastrianism. We learn from the Pahlavi works that this apostle of the faith left behind him one hundred disciples who preached the Mazdayasnian faith in the land of Seistan.⁶¹ Armenia came under the Zoroastrian influence at a very early date, and a corrupt form of Zoroastrianism prevailed in the country for several centuries.⁶² Cappadocia, Lydia, and Lycia were the scene of an active Zoroastrian propaganda. The Aramaic inscriptions recently discovered in Cappadocia mention Daena, the female genius of the Mazdayasnian religion, conjointly with the native God Bel.⁶³ India and China witnessed the spread of the gospel of Iran.⁶⁴

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

[139]

CHAPTER XVI

ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE YOUNGER AVESTA

Zarathushtra is the chief of mankind as Tishtrya is of the stars. On the banks of the river Darej lived Pourushaspa of the family of the Spitamas in a small house.¹ A boy babe was born unto him. In consultation with the elders of the clan, the child was named Zarathushtra. Nature donned a festive garb, the sun shone with a brighter glory, trees strewed flowers, on the ground roses bloomed in luxuriant profusion, flowers and leaves and grass scented the air with sweet fragrance, creepers climbed the hedges in riotous luxuriance, the birds carolled in the air, myriads of tiny drops of the morning dew shone like pearls upon the leaves and branches of the trees, the clouds floated merrily in heaven, the winds made music in the lofty trees, joy filled the air, and the trees with their leafy tongues and the blades of grass and the grains of sand and birds and beasts and men and everything everywhere joyously sang: "Hail, for to us is born the Athravan, Spitama Zarathushtra."² He is said to have been renowned in Airyana Vaejah.³ Here did he commune with Ahura Mazda and other heavenly beings.⁴ Ahura Mazda made him the lord and overseer over mankind as he has established Tishtrya the leader of the stars.⁵ He was the embodiment of goodness and righteousness on earth. He was the first and best of the divine law.⁶ He tells Ahura Mazda that he will lead mankind according

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

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

1. [Vd19.4.](#)

2. [Yt13.93, 94;](#) [Y17.18.](#)

3. [Y9.14.](#)

4. [Vd19.11.](#)

5. [Yt8.44.](#)

6. [Yt13.148.](#)

7. [Y8.7.](#)

8. [Yt5.91.](#)

9. [Yt19.79.](#)

10. [Y9.15.](#)

11. [Yt5.89;](#) [13.41, 91, 92.](#)

12. [Yt13.90.](#)

13. [Yt13.88, 89, 91.](#)

14. [Yt13.92.](#)

to the thoughts, words, and deeds of the religion which is of Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra.⁷ Ardvi Sura speaks of him as the wise, clever Athravan, who has mastered the revealed law and who is himself the word incarnate.⁸ He is the holiest, the most ruling, the most bright, the most glorious, and the most victorious among men.⁹ Haoma speaks of him as the most strong, the most firm, the most clever, [140] the most swift, and the most victorious.¹⁰ He is the chief of the material world, the head of the two-footed race.¹¹ He is the first bearer of the law among peoples.¹² He is the foremost in thinking good thoughts, speaking good words, and doing good deeds. He exemplifies best in himself the virtues of the priest, the warrior, the husbandman and furthers righteousness as never done before.¹³ The Amesha Spentas longed for his advent as the lord and the master of the world.¹⁴ He is himself invoked as the wisest, the best-ruling, the brightest, the most glorious, the most worthy of sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification.¹⁵ Homage is paid unto him.¹⁶ The Kingly Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations is also his.¹⁷

Zarathushtra invokes the Yazatas for various boons. Ahura Mazda asks Zarathushtra to sacrifice unto Ardvi Sura.¹⁸

Zarathushtra thereupon offered a sacrifice unto her and begged of her a boon that he might win over king Vishtaspa to his faith and lead him to think and speak and do according to the law.¹⁹ Ardvi Sura granted him the boon.²⁰ When assailed by the demon Buiti, he offered sacrifices unto the waters of the river Daitya.²¹ Unto Drvaspa he offered sacrifice for the boon that he might succeed in bringing over Hutaosa to think, speak, and do according to his religion and to make his religion known to others.²² And the boon was granted unto him by Drvaspa.²³ He asks for the same boon from Ashi Vanghuhi and it is given him.²⁴ He invokes the Fravashis of the faithful to his help whenever he finds himself in danger.²⁵ From Verethraghna does he ask victorious thinking, speaking, and doing, questioning and answering, which the angel of victory vouchsafes unto him.²⁶ Unto Chisti, the genius of wisdom, he offers a sacrifice praying for righteousness of thought, word, and deed, agility, soundness of body, keen hearing, and eyesight.²⁷ He invokes Ashi Vanghuhi with the voice that the female genius declares to be the sweetest of all that invoked her.²⁸

[141] **Temptation of Zarathushtra.** Temptations of the prophets of God by the Evil One are recorded in the lives of the great prophets. Buddha, the enlightened one, is thus tempted by Mara and promised universal dominion if he desisted from imparting his illumination to mankind.²⁹ Satan shows Jesus the kingdom of the world and their glory and offers them all to him if he gave up God and came over to him. Several centuries before both Buddha and Jesus, the prophet of Iran is tempted by Angra Mainyu. At the command of the arch-fiend, the demon Buiti came rushing to

15. [Yt13.152.](#)

16. [Yt17.5.](#)

17. [Yt19.56 f.](#)

18. [Yt5.1.](#)

19. [Yt5.104, 105.](#)

20. [Yt5.106.](#)

21. [Vd19.2.](#)

22. [Yt9.25, 26.](#)

23. [Yt9.27.](#)

24. [Yt17.45-47.](#)

25. [Yt19.41.](#)

26. [Yt14.28-33.](#)

27. [Yt16.6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13.](#)

28. [Yt17.17.](#)

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

30. [Vd19.1-3.](#)

31. [Vd19.4-9.](#)

32. [Vd19.5.](#)

cause Zarathushtra's death. Zarathushtra saw through insight that the wicked, evil-doing demons were taking counsel together for his death. He chanted the [Ahuna Vairya \[Ahunwar\]](#) and frustrated the foul attempt of the Druj on his life. Foiled in his mission, Buiti rushed away dismayed and spoke unto Angra Mainyu that so great was the glory of holy Zarathushtra that he could see no way of killing him.³⁰ Angra Mainyu tells Zarathushtra that he was a mere man, born of human parents, and could not therefore withstand his onslaughts. Moreover, if he renounced the Mazdayasnian religion, he would award him untold riches. Unto him the prophet of Mazda retorted that neither for the love of his body or life, nor if his breath were torn away would he desist from the good Mazda-worshipping religion. With the sacred formulas as his weapons, he adds, he would strike and repel the evil brood of Angra Mainyu.³¹ Up to the end of time, up to the time that the victorious Saviour came, Zarathushtra tells Angra Mainyu that he would smite his evil.³² Thus was he first in the material world to proclaim the word for the destruction of the demons.³³ The demons fled headlong, weeping and wailing, at his sight and their malice was extinguished.³⁴ He chanted the Ahuna Vairya and drove back the demons beneath the earth.³⁵ Haoma says that Zarathushtra drove back beneath the earth the daevas that were stalking the earth in the shape of human beings.³⁶ He was the first among mortals who brought the demons to nought, who first proclaimed the word that worked their destruction, and who first denounced their creation as unworthy of sacrifice and [142] prayer.³⁷ Angra Mainyu, the wicked and deadly, howled in impotent rage that Zarathushtra alone succeeded in routing and smiting him where all the Yazatas failed to encompass his defeat.³⁸ He bewails that Zarathushtra smote him with the Ahuna Vairya, the deadly weapon, which was as a stone as high as a house,³⁹ that he burnt him with righteousness as if it were molten metal, and that he, the prophet of Mazda, was the only one who made it better for him to leave the earth.⁴⁰

- 33. [Yt13.90.](#)
- 34. [Yt19.80.](#)
- 35. [Yt19.81.](#)
- 36. [Y9.15.](#)
- 37. [Yt13.89, 90.](#)
- 38. [Yt17.19, 20.](#)
- 39. [Vd19.4.](#)
- 40. [Yt17.20.](#)

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

- 41. [Yt13.99, 100; 19.84-86.](#)
- 42. [Y19.18.](#)
- 43. [Y12.7.](#)

to his likeness, live his life, and walk in his light.⁴³ Zarathushtra thus triumphed in lighting a beacon to illumine the path for mankind to tread.

Allusions to Zarathushtra in classical literature. In absence of any authentic Iranian data regarding the age and place of Zarathushtra's birth, we eagerly turn to the testimony of the classical writers who have written up to the time of the close of the Avestan period.⁴⁴ The information, however, that we derive from them is fragmentary and mostly legendary. The cycle of legends has formed around him and he is undiscernibly remote from the writers. His name is given variously as Zaras, Zaratas, [143] Zaratus and Zoroaster.⁴⁵ Diogenes Laertius says that Xanthus of Lydia (fifth century B.C.) mentioned Zoroaster by name.⁴⁶ The earliest authentic allusion to him, however, is found in the Platonic *Alcibiades*.⁴⁷ Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-79) says that Zoroaster was the only human being that laughed when he was born and adds that his brain pulsed so forcibly that it repelled the hand put over it. Tradition has it, he says, that Zoroaster lived in a desert upon cheese for twenty years.⁴⁸ Diogenes of Laerte (second century A.D.) quotes Dino (about 340 B.C.) as saying that Zoroaster meant one who sacrificed to the stars and adds that Hermodorus, a disciple of Plato, agreed with this.⁴⁹ He is spoken of as Chaldaean by Hippolytus (A.D. 236),⁵⁰ or as an Assyrian⁵¹ or generally as a Magian or Bactrian. He is called the king of Bactria who fought with Ninus and Semiramis and was defeated.⁵² The Avestan texts are silent over the question of the age in which he was born. The classical writers speak upon the subject, but their testimony is not reliable. Pliny says on the authority of Eudoxus (368 B.C.), Aristotle (350 B.C.), and Hermippus (250 B.C.) that Zoroaster lived 6000 years before the death of Plato or 5000 years before the Trojan war, and Diogenes of Laerte quotes Hermodorus and Xanthus to the same effect.⁵³ Pliny quotes Hermippus as saying that Zoroaster composed two million lines of verse.⁵⁴ Polyhistor (about first century B.C.), Plutarch (A.D. 46-120), Apuleius of Madaura (A.D. 124-170), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-211) and Hippolytus say on the authority of Diodorus of Eretria (60 B.C.), and Aristoxenus, a disciple of Aristotle, that Pythagoras was a pupil of Zoroaster.⁵⁵ He is generally designated the discoverer of magic.⁵⁶ Dio Chrysostom (A.D. 40-120) says that according to the account given by the Persians, Zoroaster withdrew from the society of men to live in a mountain. A great fire fell from [144] heaven and kept the mountain burning, but that Zoroaster came out of it unscathed.⁵⁷ Clement of Alexandria speaks of Zoroaster as the son of Armenius and adds that he was killed in war. He quotes Plato as saying that after lying on the pyre for twelve days he came back to life.⁵⁸ Pliny states that it is not certain whether there was only one Zoroaster or others also bearing his name.⁵⁹

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

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

46. *Proem*, 2.

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

48. *ib.*, p. 44.

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

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

51. *ib.*, p. 28.

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

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

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

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

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

57. *ib.*, p. 48.

58. *ib.*, p. 73.

59. *ib.*, p. 45.

CHAPTER XVII

THE YOUNGER AVESTAN RELIGION

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

Daena, Chisti, Mithra, Raman, Rata, Manthra, Airyaman, Asha, Hvare, Maunghah, Asman, Ushah, Atar, and Zam furnish [146] us with instances in which terms that were used in the Gathas to connote the ordinary meanings are now personified as angels.

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

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

Their imprecations upon their careless votaries. A few of the Yazatas, or Adorable Ones, are conjointly honoured with Ahura Mazda in the same strain. They are eager to help man and stand by his side in the hour of his need, if they are invoked. They help man, if man remembers them. Moreover, they are themselves strengthened in their work by man's offerings. Tishtrya despondently complains to Ahura Mazda that he is worsted by his adversary Apaosha because mankind do not propitiate him with sacrifices as they ought to. If they did so, Tishtrya would be emboldened and enabled to conduct his warfare with the demon of drought more vigorously. Tishtrya complains that people do not sacrifice unto him to the extent that they do unto the other angels, who are more popular among them. Mithra, likewise, complains of man's occasional neglect of his invocation, which evokes his displeasure. And Mithra is terrible when angered. Unless man appeases his wrath by abundant sacrifices, he punishes his wretched victim mercilessly. Similarly, the Fravashis, or Guardian Spirits, are the most helpful genii, but on [147] condition that man propitiates them with sacrifices. When satisfied, they are of indescribable help, but once offended they are hard to deal with. They are to be approached with religious awe. They are to be feared, rather than loved. This fear of the celestial beings may engender obedience in man, but not devotion. And devotion is the higher of the two virtues.

Ahura Mazda invokes his heavenly ministers for help. In the Gathas we saw Ahura Mazda co-operating and holding conferences and working in consort with his heavenly subordinates. The Younger Avesta gives a picture of a step in advance in this direction. Here Ahura Mazda is often depicted as sacrificing unto the minor divinities, and asking for boons from them. For instance, he prays to Ardvi Sura, Mithra, and Vayu for favours, and they grant him these boons.¹ Vayu even goes further and says he does good to Ahura Mazda.² The Fravashis helped Ahura Mazda, and the Lord himself says that had he not received their help, great would have been the difficulty.³ But even here it is expressly said that all these beings whom Ahura Mazda invokes for help are his creations. It is he himself who has made Tishtrya and Mithra as worthy of honour, sacrifice, and prayer as himself.⁴ Rather than commanding his envoys and viceroys as the sovereign ruler to put his orders into execution, he solicits

1. [Yt5.17-19](#); [10.123](#); [15.2-4](#).

2. [Yt15.44](#).

3. [Yt13.12, 19](#).

4. [Yt8.52](#); [10.1](#).

5. [Yt8.25-29](#).

their co-operation in his work. Besides, Ahura Mazda's offering sacrifices unto other beings turns out a source of help to them. Tishtrya in his distress looks to Ahura Mazda for help. Mazda, thereupon, sacrifices unto him, which gives Tishtrya renewed vigour and strength to fight his adversary Apaosha.⁵

Ceremonial implements, textual passages, and objects and expressions that share invocation. In common with the Vedas, the Avestan texts deify the ritual implements, textual passages of the scriptures, and other like objects. The expressions of invocation and sacrifice applied to them are the same as those used in honour of Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas, and the Yazatas. The following are the objects that come in for a share of invocation in the ritual: Haoma, Aesma or the wood for the [148] fire altar,⁶ Baresman or the sacred twigs, Zaotra or libations, one's own soul and Fravashi,⁷ the Gathas, the chapters of the Yasna Haptanghaiti,⁸ metres, lines, words of the chapters of the Haptanghaiti,⁹ intellect, conscience,¹⁰ knowledge,¹¹ and even sleep.¹² Thus the creator and his creature, angel and man, ceremonial implements and scriptural texts are all alike made the objects of adoration and praise.

Zarathushtra's monologues in the Gathas as against his dialogues in the Avesta. In the Gathas the prophet addressed several questions to Ahura Mazda, but the replies were left to be inferred from the context. An advance is made upon this method, and now we have Zoroaster depicted as putting questions, and Ahura Mazda himself as answering them categorically. To invest their compositions with divine sanction and prophetic authority, the later sages wrote in the form of a dialogue between Ahura Mazda and his prophet. The greater part of the Vendidad and some of the Yashts are composed in this style. Escorted by the celestial Yazatas, Ahura Mazda comes down to Airyana Vaejah to attend a meeting of mortals convened by Yima, and warns him of the coming destructive winter and frost.¹³

The Avesta looks with unrelenting abhorrence upon idols and images of divinities. Idolatry in any form is sin. The *Shah Namah* abounds in passages depicting the Persian kings and heroes as conducting a crusade against idols and idol-worship. The conquering armies of Persia always destroyed the idols and razed their temples to the ground. Herodotus writes that the Persians did not erect idols.¹⁴ Sotion adds that they hated idols.¹⁵ The statues of different divinities were, however, not unknown among the Achaemenians. The winged figure floating over the head of Darius on the rock sculptures at Behistan is probably a representation of Auramazda. We have it on the authority of Berosus that the Achaemenian king Artaxerxes Mnemon (B.C. 404-358) had statues erected to Anahita in Babylon, [149] Ecbatana, Susa, Persepolis, Bactria, Damascus, and Sardis.¹⁶ Strabo describes the image of Omanus, that is, Vohu Manah, as being carried at a later period in procession in

6. [Y6.18; 7.26.](#)

7. [Y59.28; 71.18.](#)

8. [Y71.12, 18.](#)

9. [Vr16.3.](#)

10. [Yt13.74.](#)

11. [Y22.25; 25.6; Yt2.1; Sr1.2, 29; 2.2, 29.](#)

12. [Vr7.3.](#)

13. [Vd2.21, 22.](#)

14. 1.131.

15. Diogenes Laertius, *Prooem.* 6.

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

17. P. 733.

Cappadocia.¹⁷

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

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

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M.N. Dhalla: *History of Zoroastrianism* (1938), part 3.

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[150]

CHAPTER XVIII

THE IDEA OF GOD IN THE MILLENNIUM

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

A race of sturdy nomads of Semitic stock tending their flocks from times immemorial in the Arabian desert, of handsome features with prominent aquiline nose, is seen settling down in Palestine about thirteen centuries before the Christian era. Many of their kinsmen had laboured and suffered as slaves in Egypt, until Moses brought them deliverance. The Hebrews, as the people are known to history, found their new settlement already populated by the civilized Canaanites. The new-comers intermarried with them and adopted their civilization. They succeeded later in founding a kingdom, and under the heroic ruler David, Jerusalem became the centre of Jewish religious life and the sanctuary of their national God Yahweh. During the period of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel prophetic literature of great value arose and enriched human thought. The kingdom of Israel ended in 721 B.C., and Judah met with her destruction in 586 B.C. The Persians brought the Jews deliverance and allowed them to restore the temple of Jerusalem that was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. They flourished under the tolerant Persian rule, codified their religious laws, collected and copied the sermons and teachings and songs and ancient writings that they still possessed. Thus in a few centuries more there [151] came into being the scriptures known as the Old

Notes:

Testament, the most precious legacy of the Hebrews to mankind.

When they had lived in small groups, each tribe had its God, whom the people worshipped. Gradually a more powerful God from among these won the universal respect of the race. He was Yahweh, worshipped in the earlier stages in the form of a brazen serpent, until the idol worship gave place to a purer form of godhead. His dominion over men was contested by Baal of Tyre who received devotion from the people side by side with him both in Israel and Judah. Yahweh ultimately came out successful and remained the only God of the Hebrews. The prophet Amos (760 B.C.) raised him to monotheistic grandeur and spoke as the mouth-piece of Yahweh. Hosea and Isaiah preach against idolatry and the prophets are incessantly enjoining upon the people not to make idols or graven images and they exhort them not to worship any other God but Yahweh. It is said that Yahweh is a jealous God and brooks no homage but to him. The children of Israel had suffered in Egypt where they were in bondage. God heard their groaning and had compassion on them. He appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, burning in a bush, and said that he had come down to deliver the suffering children of Israel from bondage to a place flowing with milk and honey. He gave him ten commandments for the guidance of the people. Therein he demands that man shall fear him, walk in his ways, cleave unto him, obey him, love him, and serve him with all his heart and all his soul. He has chosen Israel unto himself above all people as a beacon of light and righteousness to mankind. Consequently, he demands that they shall serve him faithfully, and transgress not his commandments. If people walk in the Lord's statutes and keep his commandments, he gives them seasonal rains, full crops, protection against the attacks of animals and men, victory and offspring. He goes with the armies of Israel to the battlefield and fights for them against the enemies. But when they transgress his commandments, worship idols or other gods or turn apostates, he breaks the pride of their power, lets loose their enemies over them, and chastises them by visiting their country with plagues and pestilences, famines and droughts, desolation and death. It was for the inequities of his wayward children that Yahweh sent Tiglath-Pileser as his scourge to punish them and put them under [152] the Assyrian yoke. The prophet Isaiah tells the people that Yahweh uses Assyria as his rod to punish them. Those who seek Yahweh, find him. He does not fail or forsake them. But when they forsake him, and provoke him to anger, he casts them away forever. But even then if people repent, humble themselves before him, fall down on their faces, rend their clothes, and weep, he relents, forgives them, comes back to them, takes them under his protecting wings, helps them, and prospers them. The Psalms and Prophets are replete with higher ethical sentiment and aim at reforming the motives of conduct rather than regulating it by ceremonial observances. They are full of

fervent expressions of religious emotion. God is depicted here as the compassionate Father who looks to all as his children. Judaism prepares the way for a nobler type of godhead that was to be preached by Jesus.

Taoism and Confucianism. Animism and ancestral worship ministered to the spiritual needs of the people in China from the earliest times. As in the other parts of the world, the higher conceptions of gods or of some one supreme principle like Heaven as God were gradually evolving among the sages. Tradition places the Golden Age of China in about 3000 B.C. But the authentic historical records do not go beyond a millennium before the Christian era. It is in this period that great religious and social ideals were preached that have shaped the Chinese life for all time. The country was harassed by feudal warfare, and famine and pestilence worked havoc, adding to the misery of the people. Perplexed at the visitation of misfortunes and calamities, wail goes up to Heaven from a poet in the eighth century B. C. complaining that Heaven is unjust and merciless in its dealings with mankind. Such complaints are however drowned in the chorus that Heaven does not will evil. It is man's own fault, in consequence of which he suffers. Man is born good, it is said, but when he goes astray from the path of goodness, he brings calamity on his head. When there were strife and chaos stalking the earth, the sages felt that peace and harmony reigned above in heaven. Perfect was the Way or Heaven or the Tao or the one universal principle, the ultimate reality. Happiness would fall to the lot of mankind, if it followed faithfully the Way. The imitation of the Way or Heaven was therefore the ideal of earthly conduct. It was virtue and virtue brought [153] happiness. Man's duty was to cultivate the Way and the sages undertook to teach it to mankind. The Way was one which to all thinkers looked alike, but the methods of reaching it as taught by them were different.

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

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CHAPTER XIX

AHURA MAZDA

Ahura, Mazda, and Ahura Mazda. The name of God still retains its two elements separate. These have not yet coalesced into one word. In the metrical sections of the Younger Avesta the two elements are sometimes used apart from each other, or either one

of the terms may be used to designate the Supreme Being, but in the prose compositions the collocation Ahura Mazda generally occurs as a compound phrase. In the formation of compounds, however, either Ahura or Mazda alone is used for the sake of convenience. The Ahura compounds such as *Ahura-dhâta*, 'created by Ahura,' *Ahura-tkaesha*, 'of the faith of Ahura,' or the adjectival form *âhui*, 'of Ahura,' invariably represent the divine lord Ahura Mazda. Similarly, the Mazda element in the compounds *Mazda-dhâta*, 'created by Mazda,' *Mazda-yasna*, 'worshipper of Mazda,' *Mazdo-frasasta*, 'taught by Mazda,' *Mazdo-fraokhta*, or *Mazdaokhta*, 'spoken by Mazda,' invariably stands for Ahura Mazda himself.

Ahura Mazda is the highest object of worship. Ahura Mazda still holds sovereign sway over both the worlds; his authority in the world of righteousness is undisputed, and his imperial right is unchallenged. He is the greatest and the very best of the angels.¹ The Old Persian Inscriptions speak of him as the greatest of the divinities.² The archangels and angels dutifully carry out Mazda's orders. Reverence for him has never abated, and adoration of him does not languish with the advent again of the old Indo-Iranian divinities. Like the dual divinities Varuna-Mitra who received joint invocation during the Indo-Iranian period, Ahura-Mithra or Mithra-Ahura are invoked together. Ahura generally takes precedence and Mithra stands second in the compound,³ but in the *Nyaishes* composed in [155] honour of Hvare Khshaeta or the sun and Mithra, as also in the *Yasht dedicated to Mithra*,⁴ the order is reversed and we have then Mithra-Ahura. He is yet the sublimest goal of human aspiration. The best of all sacrifices and invocations are those of Mazda.⁵

The faithful acknowledge their indebtedness to Ahura Mazda and devoutly offer to him their homage and sacrifice.⁶ They worship him with the very life of the body,⁷ and they long to reach him through the medium of fire, through the Good Mind, through Righteousness, and through the deeds and words of wisdom, as well as through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.⁸ Ahura Mazda, in fact, is implored to be their very life and limb in both the worlds.⁹ It is through the Best Righteousness that the true in heart aspire to behold the Lord to approach him, and to associate with him,¹⁰ The attainment of the companionship and the Kingdom of Ahura Mazda is the pious wish of the supplicant.¹¹

Mazda's titles. The Yasna sacrifice opens with the praise of Ahura Mazda and enumerates the following divine titles: maker, radiant, glorious, the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, the most firm, the most wise, of the most perfect form, the highest in righteousness, possessed of great joy, creator, fashioner, nourisher, and the Most Holy Spirit.¹² He is all-pervading. There is no conceivable place where he is not. Clearer than the noon is to

1. [Y16.1](#); [Yt17.16](#).
2. [Dar. Pers. d. 1](#); [Xerx. Elv. 1](#); [Xerx. Van. 1](#).
3. [Y1.11](#); [2.11](#); [3.13](#); [4.16](#); [6.10](#); [7.13](#); [17.10](#); [22.13](#).
4. [Ny1.7](#); [2.7](#), [12](#); [Yt10.113](#), [145](#).
5. TdFr.28.
6. [Y13.5](#).
7. [Y37.3](#).
8. [Y36.1](#), [4](#), [5](#).
9. [Y41.3](#).
10. [Y60.12](#).
11. [Y40.2](#); [41.2](#), [5](#), [6](#).
12. [Y1.1](#).
13. TdFr. 58, 59.
14. [Y27.1](#); [Vr11.21](#).
15. [Y21.3](#).

is no conceivable place where he is not. Closer than the nose is to the ears, or the ears are to the mouth, is he to all that which the corporeal world thinks, speaks, and does.¹³ He is the greatest temporal and spiritual lord.¹⁴ He is the absolute ruler.¹⁵ He is the most mighty and righteous.¹⁶ He is benevolent.¹⁷ He is the maker, the most holy, the most wise, and the best one to answer when questioned.¹⁸ His is the omniscient wisdom.¹⁹ He is undeceivable.²⁰ He is omniscient and never sleeping.²¹ Radiant and glorious are the most frequent epithets with which the texts open the invocation to the divinity. [156] Above all Ahura Mazda is the spirit of spirits.²² This essential trait stands intact through all changes in the concept of God. He is not invested with any anthropomorphic character, and his multifarious epithets are truly the figurative expressions of human language used by man in his feeble attempt to give vent to an outburst of the feelings of devotion and reverence for his Heavenly Father. Ahura Mazda is synonymous with light, even as his opponent is identical with darkness, and the sun is spoken of as his most beautiful form.²³ Just as the *Rig Veda* speaks of the sun as the eye of Mithra and Varuna,²⁴ so do the Avestan texts call the sun the eye of Ahura Mazda.²⁵ Speaking about the nature of Ahura Mazda, Plutarch well remarks that among objects of sense the Zoroastrian godhead most of all resembles the light.²⁶ The star-spangled heaven is his garment;²⁷ the holy spell is his soul.²⁸ Many are the names by which mankind have learnt to know him. The [first Yasht](#), which is dedicated to him, enumerates seventy-four of these attributes. They are all descriptive of his wisdom, far-sightedness, power, righteousness justice, and mercy.²⁹

Only the world of righteousness is created by Ahura Mazda.

As the antithesis between the Deity and the Evil Spirit is now most strongly marked in the Later Avesta, the godhead is expressly described as the creator of everything that is good,³⁰ evil being the counter-creation of Angara Mainyu. Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu in the younger texts are described as creating good and evil in turn. The archangels are Mazda's creations;³¹ so also are the angels and men, the animals, sky, water, trees, light, wind, and earth.³² In the various enquiries which Zarathushtra addresses to Ahura Mazda in the [Vendidad](#), the divinity is portrayed as the creator of corporeal world. Ahura expressly says to Zarathushtra that he has created everything in [157] the world, and yet nothing in his creation comes up to the level of man, who is the greatest and the best of all creations.³³ Through the wisdom of Ahura Mazda the world has come into being, and through his divine wisdom it will come also to an end.³⁴

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CHAPTER XX

16. [Y56.1.](#)
17. [Y38.4.](#)
18. [Vd18.7, 13, 66.](#)
19. [Vr19.1.](#)
20. [Yt12.1.](#)
21. [Yt12.1;](#) [Vd. 19.20, 26.](#)
22. [Y4.7.](#)
23. [Y36.6;](#) [28.8.](#)
24. RV. 1.115.1; 6.51.1; 7.61.1; 63.1; 10.37.
25. [Y1.11;](#) [3.13;](#) [4.16;](#) [7.13;](#) [22.13.](#)
26. *Is. et Os.* 46.
27. [Yt13.3.](#)
28. [Yt13.81.](#)
29. [Yt1.7, 8, 12-15.](#)
30. [Y71.10;](#) [Vr11.5;](#) [Vd11.1.](#)
31. [Yt1.25.](#)
32. [Y1.1, 2, 12;](#) [2.12;](#) [12.7;](#) [17.12;](#) [37.1;](#) [38.3;](#) [Vr7.4;](#) [Vd19.13, 16, 35;](#) [21.4, 8, 12;](#) [Aog. 30.](#)
33. [Aog. 30.](#)
34. [Yt1.26.](#)

SPENTA MAINYU

Belief in an intermediary spirit between God and the world.

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

The Old Testament refers to the Spirit of Yahweh.¹ Philo Judaeus unites the Greek and Jewish ideas about Logos and says that Logos is the first-born Son of God and acts as a viceregent of God between God and the world. He is the prototypal Man after whose image all men are created. Logos is something more than Plato's Idea of the Good, because, like Spenta Mainyu, he is creatively active. In common with Spenta Mainyu, Logos is not a personal being, and like Spenta Mainyu again, he appears sometimes as identified with God and at other times seems to be an attribute of God. The Avestan texts refer to Spenta Mainyu and his adversary Angra Mainyu as *thworeshtar* or the fashioners [159] or cutters and, speaking about the work of Logos, Philo speaks of him as Tomeus, 'the cutter,' employing the word of the same meaning. Again as Spenta Mainyu or the spirit of light is shadowed by the opposite spirit of darkness, so Logos, says Philo, is the Shekinah or Glory or Light of God, but he is also the darkness or shadow of God. This is so because, he adds, the creature reveals only half the creator and hides the other half. In the *Book of Wisdom* of Solomon, Wisdom, identical with the Greek Logos, is the divine essence, living a quasi-independent existence in God and side by side with God. She works as the active agent of God in the creation of the world. In Mithraism, Mithra held the position of the Mediator between God who was unknowable and unapproachable and mankind. He fashioned the world as Demiurge. The intermediary Spirit of God occurs throughout the New Testament. Numenius of Apamea, writing in the second century, says that God has bestowed divine qualities upon a second god who acts in the world as the power for good.

1. Genesis 1.2.

The Supreme God or the First principle, he adds, works in the spiritual world, whereas the activity of the second god extends to the spiritual as well as material world. Origen, writing shortly after him, says that God created Logos or the Son. His relation to the Father is the same as that which exists between Ahura Mazda and Spenta Mainyu. The Son or Logos, says Origen, is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, but the Son is lesser than the Father. Clement of Alexandria says that Logos, represents the will, power, and energy of God. He is the creator on behalf of God. He has introduced harmony in the universe and conducts its affairs as the pilot.

The relation between Ahura Mazda and his Holy Spirit. It remains as subtle in the Younger Avestan texts as it was in the Gathas. We have already seen in the treatment of this highly abstract concept, as it is portrayed in the Gathic texts, that the term Spenta Mainyu either designated Ahura Mazda as his divine attribute, or occurred as a being separate from the godhead. The Later Avestan texts, it seems to us, lead us to the idea that Spenta Mainyu has no independent existence apart from Ahura Mazda, in other words, as shown above, he is not a personal being. The Later Avesta, moreover, as we shall see in the subsequent pages, teaches that all earthly and heavenly [160]



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Old Iranian Calendars

by

S. H. Taqizadeh

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1938

THE OLD IRANIAN CALENDARS ¹

NOTES:

1. This paper was composed in November, 1937.

[In 1917 I made a study of the history of the Iranian system of time-reckoning, with a view to writing an article on the subject in a Persian review. This took me at that time beyond the scope of the intended article, and the idea was ultimately dropped. I had, however, made a number of notes on that subject. Two years ago I came across these notes which again roused my interest in this question. I decided to carry out the original intention and, instead of throwing away these notes on which a considerable time had been spent, to incorporate them in a monograph on this somewhat complicated question. The work is already in the printer's hands, and will, I hope, be soon at the disposal of Persian scholars. I thought, however, it might be useful to give in English, as concisely as possible, the conclusion reached in the Persian work which amounts to some 350 pages, with some of the principal arguments supporting the opinion expressed therein.]

The Iranian calendar², like the calendars of many other nations, had many variations, each belonging to a different historical period or to a different geographical region. The influence of neighboring cultures, the customs of kindred races, or the change

2. The abbreviations used in this article are: B.= Biruni, AB. = al-Âthâr al-bâqiya (Sachau's edition), M.= Maquart, Y.A.= Young-Avestan, ga = gahambar

of the climate due to the southward and westward movement of the Iranians in their migration from their original home, are among the factors capable of affecting changes in the whole system or in some details of it. We have records of at least six more or less different calendars in Iran, during the Islamic period, besides the well-known Muhammadan and widely used Yazdegerdian systems of time reckoning.³ The latter, which was, at least down to the eleventh century of the Christian era, the calendar most commonly used in Iran after the Arabian calendar, and which has survived less widely used till the present century, was the same as the official calendar of the Persian empire in the Sasanian period (of course, with the exception of the era). This is hardly questionable, though we have no contemporary report of that period except as to the names of the months. All our information regarding the pre-Islamic calendar is derived from works composed later than the 8th century AD. Nevertheless, we have no reason to doubt the statements of the learned Persians of post-Sasanian times as to the calendar of their not very remote ancestors. There is also an older reference to the Persian year in a short notice by Quintus Curtius Rufus, a historian of the first century AD and biographer of Alexander the Great, from which it may be inferred that the Persian year in his time did not differ from the Zoroastrian year of later centuries. This author declares that "*The Magians used to sing a native song. There followed the Magians 365 young men clothed in purple (crimson) mantles equal in number to the days of the year. For with the Persians too the year is divided into the same number of days.*"⁴ The Persian year as we know it in the Islamic period was, in fact, a vague year of 365 days, with twelve months each of thirty days, with the exception of the eighth month, which had thirty-five days or, rather, thirty days plus another five supplementary days, or epagomenae, added to it. The only difference between this year and the year in use in early Sasanian times was in the place of the epagomenae, as we shall see.

Moreover, we know that the Armenians and Cappadocians to the west of Persia, as well as the Sogdians, the Khwarazmians and the Sistanians in the east, were all using calendars which, though the names of the months were in each case different, were, save for the place of the epagomenae in most of them, exactly the same as the Persian.⁵ Most probably all these six calendars had a common origin. Now we have fortunately Armenian documents showing the dates of some Armenian months and days in the fourth, sixth, and seventh centuries (mostly collected by E. Dulaurier⁶). These dates correspond exactly with the positions which the corresponding Persian days of the vague year would have occupied in the Julian year at that time, according to backward calculation, the only difference being that during a part of the year there would have been a difference of five days owing to the different places of the epagomenae.⁷ A similar inference may be drawn from the Cappadocian dates, with their Julian

Young-Avestan, ga.= gahambar, gas.= gahambar.

3. I propose to deal with these calendars later.

4. Curtius, iii, 3, 10.

5. The Sistanian year even in this respect, i.e. the place of the supplementary days, had no difference from the Persian year, but in the other four calendars these days were invariably at the end of the year. The Persian epagomenae were, as is known, moved a month forward every 120 years.

6. *Recherches sur la chronologie arménienne, technique et historique*, Paris, 1859.

7. It would take us too far afield to dwell upon the details of these Armenian dates here. It will suffice to say that Agathangelos,

correspondents, preserved in the writings of St. Epiphanius, the bishop of Constantia or Salamis (Cyprus), and relating to his own time. Here again we find that the Cappadocian dates occupy in the Julian year exactly the same places as the corresponding Persian dates would have occupied if the Persian vague year had been in use in that period (of course, again with five days difference due to the different places of epagomenae in the year). These dates belong to the years AD 367 and 368, in the first of which Epiphanius became the bishop of the above-mentioned metropolis.⁸ There are still other indirect evidences of the use of the same Persian year in Sasanian times, some of which were discussed in my article in BSOS., vol. ix, 1.⁹ Thus I think the existence in Sasanian and even earlier periods, of the same vague year as we find in later centuries in Persia, and which is up to the present day the calendar year of the followers of the Mazdayasnian religion, can be reasonably taken as an established fact. This calendar is the best known among all Iranian systems of time reckoning in ancient or middle ages, and is generally referred to as the Persian, Parsi, Mazdayasnian, Zoroastrian, or Young-Avestan calendar. We shall use this last term in the following pages to designate this particular system as distinct from other Iranian calendars of ancient times, such as Old-Avestan and Old-Persian, both of which will also be discussed here. It is the calendar of historical times and, as stated above, was in general use long before the Arabian conquest of Persia and for several centuries afterward.¹⁰ The later history of this calendar is more or less clear, but its earlier development and the date of its first use in Iran is controversial.

The Y.A. month name found in the Pahlavi parchment of Awraman (No.3), according to the reading of Cowley, Unvala, and Nyberg, shows that the use of these names, and most probably also of the calendar to which these months belong, goes back as far as the first century BC.¹¹ On the other hand, the existence of two other old Iranian calendars is attested by the [Behistun inscription](#), and proved by deduction from the Avestan texts. Also the use of the Syro-Macedonian calendar in Iran in the Macedonian and Parthian periods is indisputable. The latter might have been in use in official circles and State documents¹² side by side with the Young-Avestan, which may have been the people's calendar, but the two former (Old-Avestan and Old-Persian) must have preceded the Young-Avestan. Therefore the question is often asked and discussed as to when the latter was instituted. The answer is not easy to give, as the available data are very limited. For more than two centuries many scholars have tried to solve the problem, and have reached different conclusions. Freret,¹³ Gibert,¹⁴ Bailly,¹⁵ Drouin,¹⁶ West,¹⁷ and many others have discussed the question, and have suggested dates for its introduction, but their suggestions do not seem to be wholly satisfactory.

the Armenian historian of the fourth century, gives according to M. (*Das Nauroz*) the beginning of the Armenian year in 304 as corresponding to 11th September. The Persian New Year on that date was no doubt on the 6th September.

8. Though the Cappadocian year has been officially stabilized by the introduction of the Julian system of intercalation, apparently about 63 BC, following the establishment of the Roman rule in that country in the same year, the old vague year has, nevertheless, survived a long time after that date and has continued to be the popular means of time reckoning of the common people.

9. "*Some chronological data relating to the Sasanian period.*"

10. Some small changes, however, have taken place from time to time during the Islamic period, and these must be described in an article dealing with the calendars of that period.

11. The document in question was written twelve years before the Christian era.

12. It was certainly used on Parthian coins with Greek letters. According to Drouin (*Revue Archéologique*, Juillet-December, 1889) even the Macedonian months appear on the *tetradrachms* from the time of Phraates IV (37-4 BC) down to AD 190.

13. "De l'ancienne année des Perses," 1742, published in *l'Histoire de l'Académie Royale des inscriptions et belles lettres*, tome 16, Paris, 1751, partie, 2, les memoires.

14. "Nouvelles observations sur l'annee des anciens Perses," in *l'Histoire de l'Académie Royale des inscriptions, etc.*, tome 31, Paris. 1788. Mémoires pp. 51-

Gutschmid,¹⁸ though he has made a profound study of the general subject of the Iranian calendar, was, however, misled on this point (like Gibert before him) by his own misunderstanding of a passage in the book of the Persian astronomer Kushyar (tenth century) as to the coincidence of the sun's entry into Aries with the Persian month Adar in the time of the Sasanian king, Khosraw I (Anosharvan). Thinking that the passage in question meant that the equinox was on the first day of Adar, Gutschmid made this wrong interpretation the basis of his calculation, and came to the conclusion that the Y.A. calendar was introduced in 411 BC. This view found acceptance among later students of the question for some time.¹⁹

Marquart, however, in the last part of his *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran*, p. 210, went a step further in the solution of this problem. He made, indeed, a remarkable contribution towards the solving of different questions relating to the Iranian calendar in the said book, as well as in his paper "Das Nauroz", published in the *Modi Memorial Volume* in 1930. Nevertheless, his conjecture on the date of the introduction of the Y.A. calendar in Persia does not solve the difficulties involved by the contradictory indications. Adopting West's method of starting from the contemporary *Kadimi Parsi* New Year's Day, which, take into account the four-yearly retrogressions of one day, accords with the well-known fact that the Persian year began on 16th June in the year 632, during which Yazdegird III, the last Sasanian king, was enthroned, and making it the basis of the backward calculation, he reached almost the same conclusion as West, with only about twenty years' difference. This difference was due to the fact that West had relied on the Persian dates, whereas Marquart like Gutschmid, has rightly preferred the Armenian dates²⁰ because, as a result of an error committed on the occasion of the first intercalation, namely the omission of the five supplementary days in that year, the Persian dates in a great part of the year were five days in advance compared with the Armenian.²¹ Both scholars, however, have taken it for granted that the Persian year at the time of its adoption must have begun on the vernal equinox, in other words that the first day of the month of Frawardin was at that time the first day of spring. Therefore West has arrived at the years 510-505 and Marquart at 493-486 BC as being the date of the introduction of the Y.A.

80.

15. *Traité de l'Astronomie indienne et orientale*, Paris, 1787.

16. *Revue Archéologique*, 1888-9.

17. *SBE*, 47, introd., pp. 42-7.

18. *Über des iranische Jahr in Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlichen sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1862.

19. For instance, Spiegel has accepted it in his *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, iii, 670, and even M. in the first part of his *Untersuchungen*, p. 64, has followed that famous scholar.

20. West also has made his backward calculation by taking back the new year's day 0.2422 day for each year from its present place, which is not strictly accurate for ancient times. M. apparently took the Julian days as his basis.

21. The first day of the Armenian year during which the accession of Yazdegird took place corresponded to 21st June, 632.

22. According to one version the sun was on the first point of Aries at midday of the day *Ohrmazd* of the month of Frawardin.

calendar in Iran. Both authors attribute this important reform to Darius I, who according to them officially established the said calendar in the Persian empire. But it must be stated that the theory of the Persian New Year's Day originally falling on the vernal equinox is not supported by any convincing proof. The idea may have arisen from the impression made on the minds of those acquainted with the Persian calendar by Malikshah's reform in the eleventh century and the resulting celebration of the Nawruz on the vernal equinox, which prevails in Iran down to the present day. The legend of Zoroastrian cosmogony, according to which the "seven planets" including the Sun in Aries,²² were in their hypsoma or exaltation points at the beginning of the seventh millennium of world cycles, and Zoroaster's intercalation of the year to bring it back again to the same position (i.e. the sun in Aries on New Year's Day), found partly in Pahlavi works and partly in Old-Arabic books, can hardly be advanced as evidence in this connection.

All the above-mentioned hypotheses about the Y.A. calendar have been based on the supposition that the Persian year, even in Sasanian times, was a vague year of exactly 365 days, without any intercalation whatever in the civil year for making good the difference (of about a quarter of a day) between such a year and the tropic year. This presumption is, however, contrary to our oldest reports of the Iranian calendar by early Muslim astronomers. These reports are expressly to the effect that an intercalation of one month in the Persian year every 120 (or 116) years was more or less regularly carried out in pre-Islamic times.²³ It was apparently the idea of coordinating this tradition with the presupposed adoption of the Egyptian calendar system in Iran in the fifth century that led Cavaignac²⁴ to advance a totally different theory on this matter. This is based on accepting literally the statements of the Muhammadan astronomers regarding the actual intercalation in the Sasanian period even in the Persian civil year, and at the same time admitting the introduction in Persia of the Egyptian calendar without any change whatsoever (except, of course, for the substitution of Persian names for the months). The prevalent opinion, as it is well-known, is that there were two sorts of year in use: the civil year which was in general use, and the ecclesiastic, used only for religious purposes, that the first was a vague year, and that the intercalation was limited to the religious year. It is also generally believed that, in adopting the Egyptian vague year, the Iranians changed the year's beginning from the season corresponding at that time to the Egyptian New Year (December) to the vernal equinox. Now Cavaignac, though he admits that the Egyptian calendar was introduced in the fifth century BC, is of opinion that originally the Persian month Frawardin, and not the month Dai, stood for the first Egyptian month, namely Toth. Moreover, according to his theory, though this vague year (without any intercalation) possibly has been since used to a certain extent by

23. Only the Pahlavi book *Denkard* speaks of a double system and two sorts of years.

24. *JA*, t. 202, 1923, pp. 106-110.

the mass of people, nevertheless the Babylonian (or the Old-Persian used in the [Behistun inscription](#)) remained the official calendar of Persia until the fall of the Achaemenian empire, after which it was superseded by the Syro-Macedonian calendar, which lasted from Alexander's conquest till the rise of the Sasanian dynasty. He thinks, therefore, that it was in the Sasanian period that the Y.A. or Mazdayasnian calendar became the official and general means of time-reckoning in Persia, and that it was in that epoch that the intercalation in the Y.A. year was instituted, after which the year remained nearly fixed during the Sasanian period with the New Year about the time of the summer solstice. He believes also that the intercalary month was inserted at the first intercalation after Shahrewar, the sixth month (possibly in the fourth century AD) as a second Shahrewar, and that on the next occasion a second Mihr was added to the year and so forth. As a matter of fact, the beginning of the Egyptian year in AD 632 was only ninety days prior to the Persian New Year's Day, the Egyptian being on the 18th March and the Persian on the 16th June, which [9] difference might be easily interpreted as the consequence of three intercalations of one month each, during the Sasanian period (406 years.)

Of all the different theories proposed about the date of the introduction of the Egyptian calendar system in Persia, i.e. the creation or the official adoption of the Y.A. calendar, only two are, I think, more or less consistent with many of the known facts and supported, to a certain extent, by tangible arguments. These are those suggested by Marquart and Cavaignac. But each of these two theories has, nevertheless, its weak points and is far from being satisfactorily established or indisputable. They cannot, therefore, be considered as a final solution of this difficult problem.

Cavaignac's thesis agrees, it is true, in every respect with Biruni's statements²⁵ regarding the old Iranian calendar, namely that the pre-Islamic year of Persia was a stable or fixed year beginning at (or near) the summer solstice and maintained around that point by a 120-yearly intercalation of one month. But besides being incompatible with the contents of the Pahlavi books on this matter and with other evidence in favor of the vague year,²⁶ this theory cannot be brought into harmony with what we know of the parallelism of the Persian year with the Armenian, the Cappadocian, the Sogdian and the Khwarazmian years without the assumption of a very unlikely, if not impossible, condition, namely the general application of exactly the same intercalatory system to all the calendars of these different and often politically separate nations. Moreover, it must be pointed out that Biruni himself, who is our principal authority on this subject, is not consistent in this particular point, and his books contain many contradictory passages implying different times for the beginning of the old Iranian year. For instance, his statement regarding the

25. There are, of course, also similar statements by older, though less famous, writers.

26. Such as the changing positions of *gahambars*, the distribution of the months among the four seasons in [Bundahishn](#) beginning with the spring, *maidyoshahem* being the season of cutting the grass according to [Visperad](#), and its place in the middle of the month Tir according to [Afrin gahambar](#), and the two apparently different but really identical dates for Zoroaster's death in [Zadspram](#), as well as the correspondence apparently given to the month Vohuman and Shahrewar in the Pahlavi commentary of [Vendidad](#) (i. 4). and some other

last intercalation, namely that it was the eighth one and that it was executed through the intercalation of a second Aban, *i.e.* the eighth month (or a second Aban and a second Mihr together), can only be based on the supposition of the original Nawruz (1st day of the month Frawardin) having been on or about the vernal equinox, and of the latter having been always considered theoretically a New Year's Day.

On the other hand, the theory of West and Marquart of placing the official introduction of the Y.A. calendar in the Persian empire in the middle or the last part of the reign of Darius I, and attributing this reform to that monarch himself, who according to these scholars established the first day of the year on the vernal equinox, is also irreconcilable with the contents of the *Afrin gahambar* and the *Bundahishn* on this question. According to the first of these two Mazdayasnian literary documents the season festival *maidyoshahem* corresponds to 15 Tir. But the *Bundahishn* states expressly that from *maidyoshahem* till *maidyarem* the night increases, and from *maidyarem* to *maidyoshahem* the night decreases and the day increases,²⁷ though this book interprets *maidyoshahem* to be the 11th day of Tir (*i.e.* the first of the five days of that *gahambar*) probably following its source not very strictly.²⁸ Marquart is certainly right when he expresses [11] the opinion that the Mazdayasnian traditions are in this respect contradictory and that the different passages of the *Bundahishn* are not consistent. For while the summer solstice or the time when the night begins to increase in length is put, as we have seen in the above-mentioned passage, on the 11th day of Tir (or, rather, strictly on the 15th), it is declared in another passage of the same book immediately following the former that "in the feast of *hamaspathmaidem* that is the epagomenae at the end of the month Spandarmad the days and nights are equal [in length]". Nevertheless, his conclusion does not seem to be incontestable. He apparently considers the last-mentioned passage of the *Bundahishn* (relating to the equality in the length of the day and night during the five supplementary days of the year), as well as that part of the former passage implying the identity of *maidyoshahem* with the summer solstice, as authentic; but he thinks that the gloss placing this *gahambar* about the middle of Tir, and *maidyarem* about the middle of the month of Dai, is a wrong interpretation added by the author of the *Bundahishn* to the original tradition, which was based on the lost parts of the Avesta. Therefore he seems to be of the opinion that *maidyoshahem* was originally, *i.e.* at the time of the adoption of the Y.A. calendar, on or about the 1st day of Tir, and *maidyarem* on or about the beginning of the month of Dai.

Although the original concordance between *maidyoshahem* and the beginning of the month of Tir in the Old-Avestan calendar (*i.e.* the calendar of the Avestan people before the adoption of the Egyptian system) is more than possible, the traditional and rather

data discussed by the present writer in *BSOS*. ix, 1.

27. *Bundahishn*, West's translation, xxv, 2-3. Justi's p. 34.

28. The real *gahambar* day in each of the season festivals of five days' duration is most probably the last or the fifth day. But apparently the author of the *Bundahishn*, notwithstanding the fact that the point of time after which the day decreases and the night increases can only be one day, has considered all the five days of *maidyoshahem* roughly as the longest days of the year and equal in length. He has perhaps believed these days to be a stationary period, just as he considers the day and night equal in length in all the last five days of the year (in the same chapter). The whole passage relating to the two festivals of solstices, must be a faithful quotation from a very much older source (possibly the lost parts of the Avesta) without any interpolation except for the identification of *maidyoshahem* with 11th Tir.

29. This part of *Afrin gahambar* 3, 9-12, dealing with the length of the six seasons and the places of the festivals in the months is, according to Hertel (*Die*

canonical fixing of the places of *gahambars* in the Mazdayasnian months is, nevertheless, certainly based on the older and authentic sources. These [12] places are given in the part of the Avesta called *Afrin Gahambar*. Though it is generally believed that those explanatory passages relating to the places of these season festivals are addenda of later date, interpolated as glosses in the original Avestan text, there is no reason to doubt the antiquity of their contents, which I suppose is as old as the introduction or the official establishment of the Y.A. calendar in Iran.²⁹ The *gahambars* are thus fixed at an early date in these places and are stabilized in the months of the religious and fixed (*vihêjakik*) year.

Relying on the presupposed principle that the Y.A. year originally (i.e. at the time of its introduction or, rather, its official recognition by the State and "Church" in Persia) began on the vernal equinox, I myself two years ago placed the date of the institution of this calendar in the second decade of the fifth century BC, and have tried to suggest the exact date of this reform.³⁰ The reasons for this conjecture are given in a paper read before the International Congress of Orientalists held in Rome in 1935 (section iv, sitting of 26th September), as well as more fully in my above-mentioned Persian book entitled *Essay on the Iranian Calendar*.

A New Conjecture

A later study of the question, however, has led me to change somewhat my former opinion. The conclusion reached is this. The abandonment by the Zoroastrian community of their traditional Old-Avestan calendar, and by the Persian court and Government of the Old-Persian or early Achaemenian calendar, in favor of the Egyptian system took place during the Achaemenian period. This reform may not have been [13] effected in both cases (the "Church" and the State) simultaneously, and most probably one preceded the other by a considerable time. Nevertheless the final union of the two, i.e. the religious community and the court, in this matter must have been accomplished in the first decade of the second half of the fifth century BC, probably about 441. It was also then, I think, that the beginning of the year was placed near the vernal equinox, and not far from the Babylonian *zagnûg* (New Year's festival) and that the intercalation system was instituted. The reasons which have led me to this conclusion are as follows: --

There is no doubt that the Achaemenian kings used, in the early part of the reign of that dynasty, a calendar based most probably on the Babylonian (perhaps indirectly through the Elamite or Assyrian calendar). Their months were running strictly or almost parallel with the Babylonian months and their year must have been a luni-solar one like that of the Babylonians. The only difference between these two calendars was in the names of the

awestischen Jahrenszeitenfeste, *Afrinagan*, 3, p. 22), found only in seven out of thirty-one manuscripts of Avesta. Nevertheless, Hertel thinks this is taken from the *Hadokht Nask* of the Avesta.

30. I have proposed the 28th March, 487 BC, for the epoch of this reform.

31. The idea of the Old-Persian year having been borrowed from a neighboring people of the West (possibly Elamites), who in their turn might have adopted in much older times the calendar system of one of the Sumero-Babylonian cities which had the

months, and perhaps also in the fact that, while the Babylonian year began near the vernal equinox, the beginning of the Persian year was probably near the autumnal equinox. This last theory, if it should be satisfactorily proved, would suggest that this practice was a survival from that of the early ancestors of this branch of Iranian stock, as the name *sared* in Avesta and *thard* in [Darius's inscription](#) for the year and their similarity with the Indian *sarad* (autumnal season) also may suggest. We shall call this Achaemenian or south-western Iranian calendar here Old-Persian.³¹

autumnal New Year, could also be considered if this last theory about those cities could be proved. Indeed, Hommel (ERE-calendar) asserts that in the oldest forms of the so-called Chaldean calendars, e.g. those used in Ur, Girso, etc., the beginning of the year was in autumn. S. A. Pallis also (*The Babylonian akītū Festival*, p.30) states that "in the time of Sargon of Agade, Gudea, and partly also in the time of Hammurabi, the New Year began in Tishritu, and not until after that time in Nisan". He states further (pp. 30-31) that under Hammurabi perhaps the beginning of the civil year was transferred from Tishritu to Nisan, but that "in astronomical calculation, however, the autumnal equinox was still used as the point of departure". But Father Schaumberger, who is a great authority on questions relating to the Assyro-Babylonian astronomy and calendar, informs me in reply to my inquiry that there is only one passage (K 775 = Thompson, *Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon*, 16, 5s.) where two different dates (*Nisan* and *Tishri*), i.e. the spring and the autumn, are mentioned as the beginning of the year similar to the Jewish calendar, but that we have no proof for assuming that the Babylonians used in their real life an autumnal New Year. This venerable scholar contests also the actual use of a year of 360 days in Babylon or Sumer (also advanced by Hommel), and says that we have no proof for it though there are some texts speaking of months of thirty days or of a year of 6 x 60 days, which could be explained by the fact that in Babylonian business documents the months are counted as thirty days.

[14] The people among whom Zoroaster preached his new religion and founded the first Mazdayasnian community (whom we may conveniently call "the Avestan people"), on the other hand, appear to have had a totally different system of time reckoning which, there are strong reasons to believe, was an

32. According to Kaye (*Hindu Astronomy*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No.18, p.27), there is in the *Rig-Veda* also a division of the year from one equinox to the other

ancient form of the Iranian calendar of early Aryan (probably north-eastern) origin and of a rural character, beginning with or about the summer solstice, This calendar which we shall call in the following pages Old-Avestan has, in many respects, great similarity with the oldest Indian (Vedic) calendar and in some aspects also with the post-Vedic calendar, and both (the Indian and Avestan) may have had a common origin. The year of the Old-Avestan calendar, which seems to have been called *yâr*, appears to have been first divided into two main parts, from the summer solstice (*maidyošahem* or mid-summer) to the winter solstice (*maidyarem* or mid-year) and vice versa, exactly like the old Vedic year, which was also originally divided in the same way into two *ayanās* (*uttarâyana* and *daksinâyana*).³² The further division of the year in later [15] times in India into more and shorter seasons (*ritu*) up to six in number, which took place there gradually, has also great resemblance to the similar division of the year into six seasons (*yâirya ratavô*) or *gahs* among the kindred race of the Iranians, though the Iranian seasons, unlike the Indian, were of unequal length.³³ This later and gradual division of the year in both countries certainly took place as a consequence of the climatic change encountered by Indo-Aryans and Iranians during their migration southwards, and hence the difference in the way of division. The Old-Avestan year began, as already stated, with *maidyošahem* or the summer solstice, and was presumably of 360 days with two parts, each of 180 days, like the Indian *ayanās*. The second part began accordingly with *maidyarem*, near the winter solstice. The very name of this *gahambar*, which certainly means mid-year with its description or its epithet in the Avesta indicating "the cold bringer" (*Visperad* 1.2, 2.2), testifies to the year's commencing with summer. Also there is in *Yasht* 8.36, perhaps further support in favor of this theory. It is said there that when (or after) "the year [again] comes to the end for men the counselor princes (? chieftains) and the wild animals, [who] house in the mountains and the shy [animals who] graze (or wander) in the plains, watch [when it (the Tishtrya) is in] rising".³⁴ The Tishtrya, which is generally held to be Sirius, had its first heliacal rising in July in the first half of the first millennium BC (in north-eastern Iran it rose about 26th-27th July, i.e. four weeks after the solstice). Thus the people might have been waiting and longing impatiently for this rain-bringing star in the first days of the summer. The epithets of the other *gahambars*, as well as the attributes by [16] which they are qualified in the Avesta, also all agree with these supposed positions of *maidyošahem* and *maidyarem*. Again, the verse of the *Vendidad* (18.9) which refers to *Marshavan*, "who could through his wrong religion seduce one to commit the sin of not having devoted (neglecting to devote) himself to the study [of the holy text], continuously for a period comprising three springs (*thrizaremaêm*)," deserves attention. Could it not be interpreted as suggesting that the spring was the last part of the year, and

called *Devayana* and *Pitryana*, but the basis of the Vedic calendar seems to be the two solstitial divisions.

33. The Indian seasons are each of two months and all are equal in length.

34. I have followed more or less strictly F. Wolff's translation, with which most scholars agree, but Lommel in his *Die Yäsht's des Awesta*, p. 54, gives the translation of the words in italics above as "the annual tilling" (*Jahresbestellung*). If that part of the Avestan word connected with the word "year" should not prove to mean the "end" then the whole argument loses its basis.

with the third spring, a period of three full years was completed, which would mean that the year began with summer?

There must have been, in the Old-Avestan calendar, no doubt in practice, some sort of intercalation in order to keep these seasons and the agricultural and religious festivals which were at the end of the seasons more or less in their fixed places in the tropical year. But the way, by means of which this stabilization was achieved, is as little known to us as that by which the old Indo-Aryans prevented the old Vedic year from becoming a vague year. If the year (Old-Avestan) was lunar, i.e. a year of 354 days, then the intercalation must have taken place through the addition of an extra month each two or three years. Apparently this was the opinion of Marquart, who refers to this Old-Avestan year as *also vermutlich ein gebundenes Mondjahr*.³⁵ The analogy with the old Indian Vedic year and Biruni's report of a year of 360 days in the time of *Peshdadian* dynasty,³⁶ i.e. in the prehistoric Iranian period, however, make the identification of the Old-Avestan year with this sort of year (i.e. a year of 360 days) more acceptable.³⁷ We may also accept Biruni's statement as to the [17] method of stabilizing the Old-Avestan year, namely by the intercalation of one month of thirty days every six years³⁸ [and perhaps sometimes five years], though a supplementary intercalation of another month each 120 years, which he reports also in the same passage about that calendar, seems to be very unlikely in those ancient times.

This calendar must have been in use when Zoroaster appeared among the people whom we have called the Avestan people, and it must have remained in use with or without some small changes for a considerable time, thus becoming later the calendar of the early Mazdayasnian community. Therefore it must have existed in south-western Iran in the time of the first Achaemenian rulers as the religious calendar of the Zoroastrians of that region side by side with the Old-Persian calendar, which was the official system for the computation of time for the State as well as for the non-

35. *Untersuchungen*, p. 206.

36. AB., p. 11.

37. The year of 360 days was perhaps the first step in the transition from a lunar to a solar year, being half-way between 354 and 365 days. Some scholars believe that this sort of year existed also in Babylon and Nippur (see note 1, p. 13 *supra*), and there are others who suppose that the vague year of 365 days was preceded also in Egypt in prehistoric times by the same system, though there is no unanimity on this point.

38. This sort of intercalation may be a very old Aryan or Indo-European practice. Could not the six yearly feast of the calendar of the Hittites, which Goetze translates as *Sechsjahresfest* (*Kulturgeschichte des alten Orient, Kleinasien*, p. 154), be also a feast of intercalation? If this form of intercalation was really in use, then there would have been no real divergence between the dates of the Old-Avestan years with the Y.A. In this case the Zoroastrians would not have found it difficult at all to change their system to that of the Egyptians, as no real change in the position of days and months was involved. This may also give a clue to the approximate date of the institution of the Old-Avestan calendar or of the said system of intercalation which will be referred to later.

Zoroastrian people of that country.

The first reform

The contact between Persian and Egyptian culture which began with the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses in 525 BC must naturally have attracted the attention of the rising nation to that old and famous civilization. Darius, who had accompanied Cambyses to Egypt and had stayed there for some years before his accession to the Persian throne, returned to that country, after he became king, in 517 BC. He took a very great [18] interest in the Egyptian nation and their culture, treated the Egyptians kindly, became very popular with them, and was recognized by them as one of their law-givers. It is possible he took a good many Persian nobles, sages, and religious leaders with him to Egypt, and he brought with him, or summoned, to Susa the high priest of the famous *Sais* temple, *Uzahor* by name (according to an inscription now in the Vatican).³⁹ The intercourse between the two nations which developed particularly with the friendly attitude of Persia towards Egypt and the good feeling felt by the latter toward the former, may certainly have had some influence on the institutions of Persia. Therefore it is not unreasonable to assume that it was at or about this period that the high authorities of the Zoroastrian community in Persia adopted the Egyptian system of time reckoning, and thus introduced the Y.A. calendar. The similarity of principle involved by the theoretical beginning of the year in both cases (among the Egyptian and the Zoroastrian community) on or near the heliacal rising of Sirius may have prepared the ground for a rapprochement in this matter. The original New Year of Egypt was based on the time of the first heliacal rising of the dog-star (Sirius), called by them *Sopdet*, which in ancient times nearly coincided with the beginning of the rise of the Nile.⁴⁰ This was the greatest festival of the Egyptians, for the rising of the Nile was the principal source of their happiness and prosperity. Similarly the heliacal rising of *Tishtrya* (generally believed to be the Avestan name for Sirius), which was looked for as the bringer of much needed rain, the most vital necessity for the Persian cultivator during the season of excessive heat, must have been in that country as great a blessing as the rise of the Nile to the Egyptians.⁴¹ Consequently this point of time (or the first day of the month during which this star rose) had most probably been fixed, as has already been stated, as the New Year of the original people of the Avesta in the pre-Zoroastrian and early Zoroastrian periods.⁴² Moreover, the Egyptian system with a year of a fixed number of days (365) without intercalation (for the omitted fraction of day) may have appeared to the minds of the Zoroastrian priests, especially for liturgical purposes much simpler and more convenient than their own. Consequently they adopted that system and introduced the so-called Young-Avestan calendar into the Zoroastrian church and community. This community may have been by this time

39. Cf. E. Meyer, article "Darius" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition.

40. Sirius's heliacal rising for Memphis was according to the latest calculation (Neugebauer's *Hilfstafeln*) from 3160 to 2640 BC on the 17th July, from 1420 to 1050 on the 18th, and from 230 BC to AD 20 on the 19th July, varying between two consecutive days during the intervals. The Nile's rising in Egypt began, according to Ginzel (*Handbuch der Chronologie*, i, p. 190), in the twenty-eighth century BC, on 16th July. The Egyptian calendar with its vague year, as we know it, is supposed, according to the latest conjecture, to have been adopted in the same century when Sirius's heliacal rising fell on the 1st *Toth*. This was the 17th July, 2768 BC, i.e. the day after the beginning of the rise of the Nile.

41. The custom of sprinkling water on each other on the day of the *Tiragan* feast (13th day of the month of Tir-Tishtrye), practiced down to much later ages, may have been a survival of its original significance, i.e. the anticipation of the coming rain of which the appearance of Sirius on the horizon at dawn was a good omen. In the later story of the genesis of the world the creation of the water was put on the division (*gah*) of the year ending with *maidyoshahem*, which was on 15 *Tir*.

42. It is probable that the month of Tir, which we have assumed to have been the first month of the Old-Avestan year, originally began in the last days of (Julian) July, at about the time of the heliacal rising of Sirius in Northern Iran, and gradually receded until it fell, in the last part of the sixth century, three or

and community. This community may have been by this time encouraged, and perhaps even favorably regarded and supported by the court, following the anti-Magi policy of Darius after the slaying of the Magian usurper and general massacre of this caste in 522 BC.

four weeks earlier (i.e. it originally corresponded roughly to 28th July-26th August and in 510 BC to 2nd-31st July). The verses 13, 16, and 18 of *Yasht 8*, which tell of three consecutive ten-day periods, during which *Tishtrya*, after its rising, fights against *Apaosha*, the demon of drought, may refer to the three decades of the month, as Lommel remarks, (*Die Yäsht's des Awesta*, p.47) and may confirm the correspondence of the heliacal rising of *Tishtrya* with the first day of the month of the same name. As a matter of fact, the decrease of the heat and the beginning of the rain is quite natural thirty-three days after the heliacal rising of Sirius in the northern regions of Iran. This would correspond to about 22nd August (Gregorian). The retrocession of the month Tir against the tropic year may have been due either to the deficiency of the unknown system of intercalation used in the Old-Avestan calendar, or may have been caused by the abandonment of the sidereal year in time reckoning. The retrocession may have been slow or fast, according to the extent of the difference of the year with the real solar year (tropical). Having no information as to the rate of this retrocession, we cannot discover the date of the original correspondence between the first day of Tir and the heliacal rising of Sirius, which was probably also not far from the date of the original composition of the oldest part of the non-Zoroastrian nucleus of that older *Yasht* (*Tishtrya Yasht*). With a year of 300 days and the intercalation of a month each six years this would take about a century or a little more, and if this kind of calendar really preceded the Y.A., its institution (or, at least, the original composition of that part of the said *Yasht*) can be reasonably put in the second half of the seventh century BC. As the full visibility of Sirius in the Eastern

horizon at dawn by everybody may be sometimes later than the date of its first heliacal rising, according to the astronomical calculation (see Ginzel, iii, p. 368), this would put the date of the first rain still later towards the end of summer and hence more in keeping with actual conditions in Northern Iran.

Thus the reform consisted in giving up the Old-Avestan calendar and copying exactly the Egyptian vague year in all respects even in the place of the New Year. The Zoroastrian community adopted the same system of twelve months of thirty days each, with a yearly intercalation of five days at the end of the year instead of making up for the deficiency of eleven or five days in their former year, by a three- or six-yearly intercalation. They kept, however, the essential and most important parts of their former calendar, namely the natural and religious season festivals or *gahambars* and, of course, they replaced the Egyptian month names by the Old-Avestan (pre-Zoroastrian) month names or (in most cases) by the names of their own supreme deity and archangels.⁴³

43. As to the question whether the months with the names of *Tishryehe*, *Mithrahe*, and *Apam(napâtô)* existed in the Old-Avestan calendar, and were not changed in spite of these names being unpopular with the early followers of Zoroaster, or they were received into the Y.A. calendar on the occasion of the second reform (see *infra*), there is no tangible evidence in favor of one or the other theory. In the second case the introduction of these, names must have followed the admittance of these non-Zoroastrian deities into the Mazdayasnian pantheon. It is possible that the months with these names belonged to the older and popular calendar of Iranian peoples other than the Avestan, especially the Western Magian community, who went over later to Zoroaster's faith. The form of the name of the fourth month (Tir) in the calendar of all the peoples using the Y.A. year may be supposed to point to its Old-Persian origin and to suggest that it was received into the Y.A. calendar in the Persian period.

If the Zoroastrian names of some months were already in use, the month of the highest divinity (Ahura Mazda), which was till then the seventh month of the year, i.e. at the beginning of the second half-year, coincided at that time with the first Egyptian month Toth, and both corresponded, roughly, to the first month of winter. Therefore that month became the first month of the new calendar. If, however, the month names of the Y.A. calendar were introduced at the same time as the calendar itself was adopted, then it was natural that the first month of the new calendar should be named after the same highest divinity *dadhvâ* (modern Dai), the epithet of Ahura Mazda.

The order of the *Amesha Spentas* in the month names which has so far puzzled the scholars may, I think, be explained as follows:

Putting the month of the creator on the top (the beginning of the year), the order of the Archangels is followed, not according to their well-known and familiar succession, but according to their range in sitting before the throne of Ohrmazd in the heaven on each side in accordance with their age and sex, as given in the *Great Bundahishn*. Their sequence is only broken now and then by the months consecrated to the older deities. After the supreme divinity comes first *Vohu Manah* from the right hand, then *Spenta Armaiti* from the left, then (interrupted by a non-Angelic month) *Asha Vahishta* from the right, then the twin Angels *Haurvatat* and *Ameretat* from the left (though separated again by a stranger) and then at last *Khshathra Vairya* from the right.

The Egyptian habit of naming their months and days after different divinities also was not apparently without influence in the denomination of the new Mazdayasnian months and days. The name of the first day of the Egyptian months was identical with the name of the first month, likewise in the Y.A. calendar the first day of every month is named *Ohrmazd* (*Ahurahe Mazdao*), which is the name of the supreme God, whose epithet was *dadhvâ* (gen. *dathushô*), the patron of the first month. Again the consecration of the five supplementary days at the end of the year and perhaps also the 19th day of the first month⁴⁴ to the reverence of manes in both calendars (Egyptian and Y.A.) does not seem to be wholly incidental. Now, if we assume the date of this reform as being about 510 BC, we shall obtain the following correspondences: the Egyptian year began at that time on 29th December (Julian) and consequently the beginning of the Iranian year, i.e. the first day of the month Dai, which corresponds to the first day of the Egyptian month Toth, must have been placed also at the same point; the summer solstice fell on the 20th June⁴⁵ and the third day of the month Tir, about when the first day of the lunar month in that year (509 BC) also began⁴⁶; the Egyptian epagomenae as well as the Persian *andargâh* or *Gatha* days (five supplementary days of the year) were after the Egyptian month, *Mesori* (twelfth month), and the parallel Persian month, Adar, respectively, and corresponded to 24th-28th December; the month Tir corresponded to 27th June-26th July, and thus the helical rising of Sirius in Iran could have fallen in this month.⁴⁷

44. The 19th day of the month *Frawardin* (the first month of the year in later periods) is called *Frawardigan*, i.e. by the same name as the five supplementary or *Gatha* days. It is possible that in the first period the 19th day of the month Dai (then the first month of the year) bore this name and was consecrated to the same duties as the 19th *Frawardin* in later times. The possibility of the transmission of the name from one to the other on some occasion of the eventual concordance between the two is, from a practical point of view, very remote.

45. More strictly at about 2:30 a.m. of that day in Iran.

46. The new moon was in Iran on 26th June about 6-7 o'clock p.m., thus the day following the first visibility of the crescent was, most probably, the 29th June.

47. According to Nöther's calculation (Geiger, *Ostiranische Kultur*, p. 309) in the regions with 38° of latitude, Sirius must have risen in the middle of the seventh century BC on the 1st day of August at 3.3 a.m. Accordingly the time of its rising on 26th July at the end of sixth century BC will be approximately 3:20 a.m. and on the 1st July about 5:10. Thus the first appearance of this star at dawn could have taken place in the last part of Tir. Had the Y.A. year originally, i.e. at the time of

its introduction in Persia, began with the first day of Frawardin and the vernal equinox, as some prefer to believe, the month Tir would have corresponded to 26th June-24th July, which brings it to a still earlier date and makes the heliacal rising of Sirius in this month more questionable.

If there is any truth in the tradition reported by Biruni (*AB.*, pp. 233-4) to the effect that, after the coming of Zoroaster and the [later] transfer by the Persian Kings of their residence from Balkh (Bactria) to Fars and Babylon, the Persians paid [special] attention to matters relating to their religion, renewed their astronomical observations, and found that in the third year from the [last] intercalation, the summer solstice preceded the beginning of the year by five days, and that they then gave up the older reckoning and adopted the results of their new computation, the explanation may be as follows: by adopting the Egyptian system, an adjustment in the position of the Iranian months in use up to that time was perhaps carried out. The mere act of making the Iranian year conform with the Egyptian by making the seventh month of the Old-Avestan calendar (the later Dai) parallel (i.e. in full and strict correspondence) with Toth, the first Egyptian month, would have necessarily caused a shift in the places of the other Iranian months. For instance, if the month of Tir, which according to our theory was the first month of the Old-Avestan year, normally ought to have begun on, say, 2nd July, given that the reform had not taken place in that year, it was bound to move a few days back when the first day of Dai was put at the same position as the first day of the Egyptian Toth (about 29th December), making Tir to correspond to the Egyptian *Phamenoth* (27th June-26th July).

This hypothesis will also explain the position of the month of Dai which, according to this, was originally in its logical and right place as the month of the supreme God, whereas, in the later order of the months in the Y.A. year, its position (the tenth month) always seemed anomalous. It will account also for the unexpected length of the *gah* (*yâiryâ*) ending with the *gahambar* of *maidyarem* (eighty days instead of seventy-five) and the traditional place of this *gahambar* on the 20th day of Dai (celebrated from 16th to 20th) instead of 15th, which was to be expected as the second pole of the Old-Avestan year opposite to *maidyoshahem* on 15th Tir. Both these points can thus be explained. As it has been stated, the Egyptian epagomenae being at the end of the year and immediately preceding the month Toth, the Persian *andargâh* should have taken their place at the end of the month Adar immediately before the month Dai. This would have made the interval between the 1st Tir and the 1st Dai 185 days instead of 180 days, which was according to our assumption the original interval. Consequently the length of the last *yâiryâ*

48. In most cases throughout these pages it is the last of the five days of each season festival which is meant by the *gahambars*, as this is generally believed to be the real or the main day of the feast.

(*gâh*) of the year ending with *maidyaem* would have increased from seventy-five to eighty days. In the second and last reform, however, when the Y.A. calendar was officially recognized by the State and was made the civil calendar of the empire, the Gatha days were removed from the end of Adar to the end of Spandarmad, which was fixed at that time as the end of the year. But the length of the *yâiryâ* from *ayathrem* to *maidyaem* was not readjusted accordingly and still remained in Persian reckoning eighty days in length. Therefore the *maidyaem* had advanced five days from its usual place in the month of Dai, which must have been at that time on the 15th of that month, to the 20th of the same month where it was then stabilized (in the religious or *vihêjakîk* year).⁴⁸ The Khwarazmians, unlike the Persians, carried out correctly the necessary adjustment due on this account, as appears from the length of the intervals between their *gahambars* corresponding to the Avestan and Persian *ayathrem*, *maidyaem*, and *hamaspathmaidyem*, i.e. *arthamîn (?)*, *binkhajâchî raid (?)*, and *maithsokhan raid (?)* respectively. The interval between the two former is (AB., p.237-8) seventy-five days, and between the second and the last, eighty days. This may point to the antiquity of the Khwarazmian calendar compared with that of the Armenians or the Cappadocians, etc. The positions of the Khwarazmian *gahambars* differ from those of the Persian by five months, and from the original places given in [Afrin-Gahambar](#) by three months. This fact may suggest that the Khwarazmians followed the Persians in the matter of intercalation up to the third one (presumably executed about 81 BC), after which the former ceased to intercalate, perhaps in consequence of the weakening of the cultural relations between the two peoples, following the Scythian invasion of Bactria and the adjacent countries about 130 BC.

The Second Reform

The positions of the *gahambars* in the Y.A. calendar are not easy to explain and have been the subject of much discussion. If the Y.A. year originally (i.e. at the time of its official adoption and the institution of the intercalation system) began with the vernal equinox and the month of Frawardin, the *gahambar* of *hamaspathmaidyem* would have then fallen on the last day (or days) of winter, but then *maidyoshaem* (or the midsummer festival) with its traditional place on 15th Tir would not have corresponded either with the middle of the well-known summer of three months or with the middle of the bigger summer of six months, i.e. the brighter and warmer half of the year from the vernal to the autumnal equinox.

The explanation proposed by Cama⁴⁹ for the apparent lack of harmony in the arrangement of the places of the *gahambars* in the year, which was considered for some time by most scholars to be satisfactory, is also open to some objection. Cama tried to

49. K. R. Cama, *Actes du VI Congrès International des Orientalistes*, 3, 583-92.

find the solution of this rather peculiar arrangement by ascribing the institution of the different *gahambars* to different periods. According to him, in the early times, when the year was divided into two parts only, namely a summer of seven months and a winter of five months, four *gahambars*, viz. *maidyošahem*, *ayathrem*, *maidyarem*, and *hamaspathmaidem* were created as the feasts of the middle and the end of the said Avestan summer (*hama*) and winter (*zyam* or *zayana*) respectively. But the other two, i.e. *maidyožarem* and *Paitishahem* were introduced in later times after the well known four seasons of the year, each of about three months, had come in use, thus marking the middle point of the spring and the end of the summer (of three months) respectively. Apparently Cama also believed that the Mazdayasnian year began originally on the vernal equinox, as his explanation of the places of *maidyožarem* and *paitishahem* shows.

That the *maidyošahem* originally corresponded, as is implied by the literal meaning of the word, to the middle point of the Zoroastrian summer of seven months is, no doubt, indisputable,⁵⁰ though this "Zoroastrian summer" meant only the 210 days' interval between *hamaspathmaidem* and *ayathrem*, without implying by any means a stable correspondence between the first of these two *gahambars* and the day immediately preceding the vernal equinox. It is also true that the *gahambars* were not all instituted simultaneously. Also it must be admitted that in the later Sasanian times, as well as in the early centuries of Islam, the original position of the *vihêjakîk* month Frawardin considered as corresponding to the first month of the spring.⁵¹ But as stated above, this theory of the first day of (*vihêjakîk*) Frawardin being on the vernal equinox does not agree with the statement of the author of the *Bundahishn* regarding the increasing of the night and decreasing of the day from *maidyošahem* onwards, or with the epithets given to the *gahambars* in the Avesta (*Visperad*, 1.2: 2.2). *Maidyošahem* is described there as the time when the mowing of the grass takes place, *paitishahem* as the time of the harvest of the corn, and *ayathrem* as the season of driving the cattle home from summer pasturage (i.e. the time of retiring from the field into winter dwellings) and of the mating of the sheep (also *Yasna*, 1.9, 2.9, 3.11, 4.14). If these *gahambars* were originally celebrated, as the equinoctial theory of the new year implies, on the 150th, 180th, and 210th days after the vernal equinox, which dates correspond roughly to the 3rd July, 16th September, and 16th October respectively in the Gregorian calendar, the seasons would have been too far advanced in Iran for the agricultural and pastoral occupations attributed to them to have been carried out, as Marquart rightly pointed out in the case of the two latter (*Untersuchungen*, p. 205). Therefore we may reasonably hold to the description of *maidyošahem* in the *Bundahishn* as the starting point of the shortening of the days and the lengthening of the nights, and put it on the summer solstice or

50. J. Hertel, however, believes that the positions of *maidyošahem* and *maidyarem* were in early times the reverse of their later positions and that through a later reform they interchanged their places in the year (see his work *Die awestische Jahreszeitenfeste*).

51. *Bundahishn* gives Frawardin, Ardwašisht, and Hordad as the three months of the spring (Justi's translation, p. 35), but this and similar records point only to the conception prevalent in later times, originating in the post-Sasanian period. I think all these possibly go back to a reform carried out in the time of Sasanian King Firuz (457-84), to which reference, will be made in the following pages.

52. As it is said this part of *Afrin*, which in some manuscripts gives the dates of the days and months of the *gahambars* or season-festivals in the *vihêjakîk* year and months, is believed to be a later addition. Nevertheless, its original source at least must have been composed not later than the date of the first intercalation (presumably in the last quarter of the fourth century BC), if not as early as the time of the institution of the intercalary system and the stabilization of the *vihêjakîk* year in the middle of the fifth century

the middle point of the longer summer (the warmer half of the year). We may also at the same time admit as correct the place given to this *gahambar* in the Mazdayasnian year in the Avesta, namely 15th Tir (*Afrin Gahambar 7-12*, Wolff's translation of the Avesta, p. 303).⁵² This agrees also with the place given to it in the *Bundahishn*, except that the latter book is less strict when it places the beginning of the shortening of the diurnal arc on the first day of the five festival days (11th Tir) instead of the last (15th), which is the real *gahambar* day.

Undoubtedly it was these considerations that led Roth⁵³ to suppose that the beginning of the old Iranian year (1st Frawardin) was originally on 8th March (Gregorian), and Bartholomae,⁵⁴ Geiger,⁵⁵ and others have followed him in this supposition.⁵⁶ This comes to thirteen days before the vernal equinox. This was the position of the Y.A. year in the third quarter of the fifth century BC.

This theory explains satisfactorily many difficult points mentioned above, relating to apparent anomalies, and it agrees with almost all our data on this matter. The only remaining difficulties are in: (1) the passage of the *Bundahishn* indicating the equality of the length of the day and night at the time of the festival called *hamaspathmaidem*, to which reference was made above, and (2) the meaning of the word *maidyozaem*, which is supposed to be mid-spring. Both these points, if they cannot be otherwise explained, may imply that the year began on the equinox, and could be advanced as evidence in support of that opinion. L. Gray tries to explain this inconsistency in the tradition by supposing that "the year originally began with the vernal equinox, and solstitial festivals were introduced later when the actual beginning of the year had receded by thirteen days (i.e. to 8th March)".⁵⁷ But as the *gahambars* had nothing to do with the civil (*Oshmutik*) year before AD 1006, and as their places were fixed in the *vihêjakik* or fixed religious year, they must have been established in the places given in the *Afrin Gahambar* according to their positions in one particular year, and not according to their individual positions in separate years. For if the place of *Maidyozaem* had been originally, on the forty-fifth day after the vernal equinox, it would have fallen on 28th Ardwhahisht, when the beginning of the civil year had receded thirteen days in the tropic year.

Therefore all the six *gahambars* must have been stabilized in their traditional places in the (*vihêjakik*) Y.A. year

of the fifth century.

53. *ZDMG*, 34, p.701.

54. *Altiranishes Wörterbuch*, pp. 160, 838, 1117, 1118, 1776.

55. *Op. cit.*, p. 322, where he puts it on 9th March.

56. They did not say, however, what they meant by "original position" and have not proposed a date for this original year, though this naturally implies a certain point of time after which the year should have become vague and altering its position with respect to the tropic year.

57. Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, pp. 128-9.

simultaneously when the intercalation was introduced. Consequently these places represent the positions which these season festivals happened to occupy in the civil or the vague year at that date, i.e. they had reached those places on account of the retrogression of the civil year against the tropical year. These festivals then became fixed, being celebrated always on the same days of the *vihêjakîk* or religious year, as registered in the *Afrin Gahambar*, and corresponded thus approximately always with the same astronomical positions in the tropic year but advanced in the civil year.⁵⁸

The statement as to the equality of the day and night on *hamaspathmaidem* occurring in the *Bundahishn* was in all probability due to a misunderstanding caused by the later popular belief in the equinoctial beginning of the original year, an opinion possibly having its origin in Zoroastrian mythology and cosmogony, as already stated, which also, in its turn, may have been influenced by the Babylonian *zagnûg*.⁵⁹ As to the meaning of *maidyozaem*, even if it could be proved that the word *zaremaya* means spring, it is by no means certain that it represented strictly the astronomical spring. This is very unlikely, since such a notion (the division of the year into four equal parts as it is at the present day) hardly existed among the Avestan people.⁶⁰ It may rather have been a name for the earlier part of the Avestan summer, which was seven months long, from *hamaspathmaidem* till *ayathrem*. In the long interval between these last-named festivals some other holidays for rest and offering, besides *maidyozaem* in the middle, may have been considered necessary. Therefore the forty-fifth day of this interval or the end of the first three units⁶¹ of time reckoning was added to the already existing season festivals, and it was made a holiday of the season of milk, honey, and juice. Thus this *gahambar* was probably instituted much later than the other *gahambars*, just as the Indian *vasanta* (or *vasara*) was most probably introduced later than the other seasons. This Iranian festival which was celebrated sixty days before the summer solstice and corresponded to 24th April (Gregorian), was called *maidyozaem* or (roughly) the middle-point of spring in the popular (and not astronomical) sense of the word, i.e. the season of the revivification of nature and vegetation.⁶² It is curious that *Thuravâhara*, the name of the Old-Persian month, corresponding to the second Babylonian month *Iyyâr*, means also mid-spring, and that in 441 BC, when according to our conjecture the Y.A. calendar was made the official calendar of Persia, the first day of this month coincided with the 15th day of *Ardwahišt*, which has been stabilized as the *vihêjakîk* day of *maidyozaem* in the Mazdayasnian year.⁶³ It must also be noted that the spring in most parts of Persia is very short and that the weather changes from cold to excessive heat with a short interval between the two.

58. The *gahambars* under the influence of intercalation, fell one month later in the civil year, after each intercalation. With the last intercalation they reached to points eight months posterior to their original places: e.g. *maidyozaem* corresponded then to the 15th day of the month of *Spandarmad* of the civil year as B. and others give it.

59. This belief may have its origin in, or have become general as the result of, a reform at the time of *Firuz*, which will be discussed in this article.

60. The word *vanhar*, which is perhaps from the same root as the Indian *vasar*, must have also been used for spring, not in its strictly technical meaning, beginning with the vernal equinox and ending with the summer solstice, but, as in common parlance, for the period of verdure and blossom.

61. The Old-Avestan year seems to be considered as composed of units of time, each fifteen days or a fortnight long. This is perhaps a remnant of the earliest and primitive time-reckoning of the Iranians by half-months. Consequently the year consisted of twenty-four fortnights, arranged in groups of three, four, five, two, five, and five, each of the groups being one of the six seasons or *yâiryas* (the fourth one, however, being supplemented later by five days as *epagomenae*).

62. In *Yasht 7.4*, there is mention of *zaremaem paiti*.

"when the moon brings the warmth with its light, the greenish plants shoot always towards the spring on the earth". The Pahlavi book [Dadestan-i Denik, 31, 14](#) (West's translation) speaking of the Ardwahisht (of course, the *vihêjakik* month) says that the name of this month in religion (i.e. in Avesta) is *Zaremaya* and in this month the butter of *mêdhiôk-zarem* is produced. This expression (*zaremaya raoghna* = the butter of *zaremaya*) is also used in the [verse 18 of the so-called Yasht 22](#) of the Avesta (SBE, iv, Darmesteter's English translation of the Avesta). That the beginning of the year or season was not on the point of the vernal equinox in the strict sense among the less advanced peoples is also to a certain extent due to the difficulty of ascertaining the time of the equinoxes by simple and ordinary means. B. is perhaps right when he asserts (AB., p. 216) that for the primitive peoples the observation of the solstices is incomparably easier than that of the equinoxes, which needs an advanced knowledge of astronomy and astronomical instruments, whereas the solstice can be found out by the simpler method of using a gnomon.

63. This festival is apparently the same as *jashn-i vahâr*, which was celebrated "forty-five days beyond New Year's Day at a place becoming specially noted where people went from many quarters out to the place of festival (*yasno kêr*)" and whereto Zoroaster has proceeded ([Selections of Zadspram](#), West's translation, *SBE*, xlvii, p. 154). If this tradition is old and authentic it indicates that this festival, though comparatively of later origin, nevertheless existed in Zoroaster's time and was celebrated with full attendance. The translation of the passage of *Zartusht Nameh* relating to this festival by Wilson (*The Parsi Religion*, Bombay, 1843),

The truth about the Old-Avestan season festivals is that although they had their fixed places in the tropic year, they had nothing to do with the well-known astronomical four seasons now in general use. None of them is based on one of the four main points of the tropic year (equinoxes and solstices) except *maidyošahem* which, as the beginning of the year, corresponded in principle to the summer solstice and was the fundamental point of the year and the basis for the calculation of all other seasons. *Maidyarem* was not the name for the winter solstice, but since it was the middle point of the year, which is the meaning of its name, and came 180 days after *maidyošahem* at the beginning of the second half-year, it fell naturally on (or strictly speaking about) the opposite solstice or the second pole of the year. Then counting backward and forward from *maidyošahem*,⁶⁴ the point 105 days or seven fortnights before it was made the first day of the Avestan summer, and the day preceding this last point was made a season festival called *hamaspathmaidyem* as the end of retirement, or the end of the off-season, and the beginning of outdoor or field work, and in the same way the point 105 days after *maidyošahem* was considered as the end of the summer (the festival of *ayathrem*). Thus the Avestan winter began, in the same way, seventy-five days or five fortnights before *maidyarem* and ended seventy-five days after it. Consequently *maidyošahem* became the middle point of the Avestan summer of seven months (mid-summer) which now had three festivals: one at the beginning (or, rather, the day preceding it), one at the end, and one at the middle. The winter, being shorter, was divided in two equal parts forming only two *yâiryas* (*gahs*), but the summer, being longer, a further division took place⁶⁵ and two more festivals were created, viz. the festival of the harvest (*paitishahem*), seventy-five days after *maidyošahem*, and the festival of high spring or the season of milk, butter, honey, and blooming countryside (*maidyozare*), sixty days before it.

Now it is possible that the Zoroastrian community, a considerable time after the adoption of the Egyptian calendar system, noticed a change in the position of their most important festivals. This change was bound to take place as a consequence of neglecting the necessary intercalation that was due on account of the omission, each year, of a quarter of a day by which the real solar year (tropic) exceeds the vague year. They realized then the necessity of some sort of intercalation which, while compensating for the accumulated shortages caused by omitted fractions would not interfere with the order of the days in the months, and would cause no divergence between the intercalated and the vague year in the names of the corresponding days. The addition of a thirteenth month to the year was already known to

however, does not agree fully with putting it in the second month of the year.

64. Exactly as the Khwarazmians of the tenth century, according to B. (AB., pp. 236, 237, and 241), used to count from the day *Ajgâr* (most probably in origin the Khwarazmian *maidyošahem*) in both directions for fixing the seasons for all kinds of agricultural work.

65. Summer being the season of work for agricultural people, many holidays for rest were, no doubt, needed, contrary to winter, which was the off-season.

66. A parallel is to be found in the Jewish fast of *âšhûrâ* adopted at first by Muslims, but changed later to the month of *Ramadan* when their relations with the Jews became unfriendly.

67. That Nehemia's patron was the first Achaemenian king of this name and not the second is, I believe, proved by the Aramaic papyri of Elephantine cf. Schäder, *Ezra der Schreiber*.

68. This fast (the settlement of

the Persians from the Babylonian calendar, also most probably from the Old-Persian and the Elamite, as well as perhaps from the Old-Avestan calendars. The intercalation of a month once each 120 years would bring back every day of a vague year to the same Julian day to which it had originally corresponded, though not exactly to its original place in the tropical year. The establishment of such an intercalation, which means the adoption of the *vihêjakîk* (fixed) year, was probably simultaneous with the transference of the year's commencement from the month Dai to the month Frawardin. Consequently the established correspondence between the Egyptian and Persian New Year was abandoned, and the Persian year began from that time not far from the Babylonian *rêsh shatti* and its feast *zagnûg*. This reform was an important step, and it was possibly connected with some special factors. The successive revolts of Egypt, the killing of the Persian Governor there, followed by a long struggle during the first years of Artaxerxes, and the hatred of the Egyptians for this monarch and his father on the one hand, and the growing intercourse and rapprochement between Persians and Babylonians on the other, are perhaps among the possible factors of the change.⁶⁶ Artaxerxes I, whose residence was in Susa, where Nehemia took leave from him in 445 (*Nehemia, 1.1*), transferred it later (perhaps owing to the destruction of his palace by fire or to his conversion to a new faith (?)) to Babylon, where Nehemia found him again in 433 (*Nehemia, 8.6*).⁶⁷ The court remained in Babylon apparently for the most part until Artaxerxes II moved again to Susa after 395.⁶⁸ But besides this and similar reasons for the reform of the calendar, can we not seek the decisive factor in the conversion of the Achaemenian rulers to the Zoroastrian religion? If this supposition should prove to be correct, then it must have been on this occasion that a compromise was effected by which the Zoroastrian New Year's feast was brought more or less into harmony with the Babylonian *zagnûg*, and the Old-Persian feast of Mithra was taken into the Avestan calendar. Thus the court would have given up the Old-Persian and adopted the Mazdayasnian calendar except for the beginning of the year. In this last matter the Zoroastrian priests seem to have made a concession to the desire of the king by fixing the New Year near to the vernal equinox, and more particularly by the incorporation into the Mazdayasnian year, of the feast of Mithra, which appears to have been the greatest festival of the South-Western Iranians and of the Achaemenians, and by officially recognizing it. Also the Zoroastrian composition of some of the older *Yashts* of which (or at least of parts of which) a non-Zoroastrian or perhaps even pre-Zoroastrian nucleus may have already existed among the Magian communities of Media and Persia as hymns of praise to older Aryan deities or as mythological songs and epics, may have been connected with this epoch-making change. It was then that the incorporation of these materials in the supplemented and

68. This fast (the settlement of the court in Babylonia for more than half a century) may account for many other tendencies in the Achaemenian empire, and perhaps among others for the adoption of the Aramaic language as the official means of correspondence in the imperial chancellery and State departments.

69. The mention of Babylon in *Yasht 5.29* fits in with the removal of the seat of the government or of the court from Susa to Babylon by the first Zoroastrian king, Artaxerxes I, the Constantine of that faith. The same *Yasht* contains the name of Anahita, which may also increase the probability of its composition in that period.

enlarged sacred book took place, as well as the adoption of the said ancient and non-Zoroastrian popular divinities such as [Mithra](#), [Anahita](#), [Tishtrya](#), and [Verethraghna](#) (who were perhaps the *Daevas* of the early and pure Zoroastrian faith) into the religion and its revised canon.⁶⁹

The [Afrin Gahambar](#) or, at any rate, its supplementary part dealing with the lengths of the *gahs* and with the days and months of the season festivals represents this period, and the basis of it at least must surely have been composed at this time, i.e. about 441 BC⁷⁰ Although the contents of this *Afrin* are believed to be derived from the [Hadokht Nask](#) of the Avesta, that part of them which concerns the six seasons of the creation and their length, is repeated more fully in the cosmogonical chapters of the *Gr. Bundahishn*, which no doubt are based on the [Damdad Nask](#) of the lost Avesta. Through comparing a tract of the pseudo-Hippocratic Greek work (*De hebdomadibus*) with the material of the *Gr. Bundahishn* on microcosm and macrocosm taken from the said *Damdad Nask*, Albrecht Götze (*Zeitschrift für Indologie u. Iranistik*, ii, 1923, pp. 60 and 167) has proved that this *nask* must have been composed not later than the fifth century BC.⁷¹ (Reitzenstein proposes 430 as the lowest limit, *Studien*, p. 130 n.). Perhaps the absence of Mithra, Anahita, etc., in the inscriptions of early Achaemenian kings, including that of [Artaxerxes I](#) belonging to the early part of his reign, and the appearance of these deities in the next inscription of any length (that of [Artaxerxes II](#)) can also be explained by this theory,⁷² i.e. the conversion of the Achaemenians to Zoroastrianism between the two dates. The absence of the name of Zoroaster from the books of Herodotus (composed about 447 BC) and its mention in [Alcibiades, i, of Plato](#) (about 390 BC) may also indicate that the faith of the Iranian prophet had become the State religion during that interval.⁷³

70. Or at any rate before the first intercalation of the Persian year.

71. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, "Plato u. Zarathustra" (in *Vortäge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1927) and *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 1926, as well as H. H. Schäfer in the last-named volume.

72. The mention of these deities in the inscription of Artaxerxes Mnemon or the report of Berossos about his special attachment to the same divinities does not necessarily imply that they were first recognized during the reign of this monarch, as is often held. This recognition might have taken place at any time between the unknown date of the inscription of Artaxerxes Macrocheir and that of Mnemon, unless some long inscription should be discovered belonging to the later part of the reign of the former king or from the reign of Darius Ochus, praising Ahura Mazda and ignoring Anahita, Mithra, and others.

73. As Benveniste remarks (*The Persian Religion according to the chief Greek Texts*, 1929), this is "the first definite mention of the name of Zoroaster in Greece". The passages attributed to Xanthus the Lydian relating to the date of the Iranian prophet or to the recalling of his words by Persians when they were going to burn Croesus are of doubtful authenticity. Even if they proved to be authentic, they would not imply the adherence of the Persian kings to Zoroastrianism, but would only suggest that Xanthus knew the name of the Iranian reformer whose new religion had gradually been spreading (westwards) in Iran for some hundred years before his time. Clemens puts the

Further evidence supporting the same theory

The following considerations may help to make the date suggested as that of the second reform of the calendar more acceptable: --

1. Herodotus, who wrote his book in the early years of the second half of the fifth century BC, although he speaks of the Egyptian year and finds it preferable to the more complicated year of the Greeks ([ii, 2](#); Rawlinson's translation, ii, 3), does not mention the Persian year as having the same simplicity as the Egyptian. It may be inferred from this omission, as Marquart has pointed out, that Herodotus did not know the Y.A. calendar of the Persians. Ctesias's mention of the feast of Mithra in Persia, at which even the king could get intoxicated,⁷⁴ is, on the other hand, possible evidence of the existence of the new calendar to which the festival he thus names (most probably the well-known Mithrakan or Mithrakana of Strabo) apparently belonged, in the last years of the fifth century BC when he was in Persia.⁷⁵

2. The last of the intercalations (of a month each 120 years) took place, according to Biruni (AB., pp. 33, 45, 118, and 119) in the reign of the Sasanian king Yazdegird I (AD 399-420). This was the seventh intercalation when the seventh month (Mihr) had to be repeated according to the established rule. On this occasion two successive intercalations (the seventh and eighth) were carried out together, one which had already fallen due and the other in anticipation. This double intercalation had to be effected by repeating the months Mihr and Aban in the same year, making it a year of fourteen months. Therefore the epagomenae were placed at the end of Aban, where they have remained till AD 1006, and in some provinces until much later. Now the seventh 120-yearly intercalation must necessarily have been on the 840th year after the institution of the intercalation. As a matter of fact, the 840th year after 441 BC, the date we have assumed for the establishment of the *vihêjakik* year, is AD 399, which is also the first year of Yazdegerd's reign. It is true that Biruni is not consistent in his statements in his different books about the date and number of the last and double intercalation. Apparently he considers this intercalation in his above-mentioned book (AB., pp. 33 and 119) as the eighth and ninth together and he says that all traditions are unanimous in putting it in the reign of Yazdegird I, but it is to be implied from his calculations in the *Qânûn-i Mas`ûdî* (composed about twenty years later) that this last intercalation was the seventh and eighth together, and he asserts that it was carried out during the reign of Firuz (AD 457-84). Nevertheless, there are reasons for believing that from a chronological point of view, his first report, in so far as the time is concerned (but not the number), is accurate, though his last statement may refer to another small reform possibly effected

74. Athenseus, *Deipnosophists*, x, 434 (English translation by Charles Burton Gulick, 1927, bk. iv, p. 469). Duris (according to the same source) adds also the permission for the king to dance.

75. He was there apparently from 414 till 398 and wrote probably in 390.

76. The scope of this article does not permit the discussion of these reasons here. The place of the epagomenae indicates that the intercalation was the seventh and eighth together, and not the eighth and ninth. The next or the ninth intercalation would have fallen in AD 639, just two years after the fall of the capital of the Iranian empire on the Arab invasion, which brought to an end the national sovereignty of Persia and all its official institutions including the intercalation in their calendar.

during the reign of Firuz.⁷⁶

3. The Mazdayasnian tradition, though it ignores the earlier Achaemenian kings before Artaxerxes I (Longimanus), refers many times to the latter monarch (Ardashir diraz-dast) and his successors as good Zoroastrians. According to the [Vohuman Yasht \(II, 16-17\)](#), this king "makes the religion current in the whole world".⁷⁷ Jackson in his *Zoroastrian Studies* (p. 168) says that "concerning the later Achaemenian rulers everybody is agreed that Artaxerxes I, II, III and Darius Codomannus were true adherents to the faith of the prophet of ancient Iran". Therefore it is certainly reasonable to presume that the adoption and official recognition of the Mazdayasnian calendar was the work of the first Zoroastrian king of Iran.

4. The feast of *Mithra* or *baga*⁷⁸ was, no doubt, one of the most popular if not the greatest of all the festivals in ancient Iran, where it was celebrated with the greatest attention. This was originally a pre-Zoroastrian and old Aryan feast consecrated to the sun god, and its place in the Old-Persian calendar was surely in the month belonging to this deity. This month was called *Bâgayâdi* or *Bâgayâdish* and almost certainly corresponded to the seventh Babylonian month *Tishrîtu*, the patron of which was also *Shamash*, the Babylonian sun god.⁷⁹ This month was, as has already been stated, probably the first month of the Old-Persian year, and its more or less fixed place was in the early part of the autumn. The feast was in all probability Old-Persian rather than Old- or Young-Avestan, and it was perhaps the survival of an earlier Iranian New Year festival dating from some prehistoric phase of the Aryo-Iranian calendar, when the year began at the autumnal equinox. It was connected with the worship of one of the oldest Aryan deities (*Baga-Mithra*), of whom traces are found as far back as in the fourteenth century BC. The fact that *Mithra* and similar ancient deities are not mentioned in the [Gathas](#), that they are strangers to the original and pure religion of Zoroaster, that even probably they were considered by this religion as *Daevas* or demons, and that they were admitted into the Mazdayasnian religion only in later times as lesser divinities of the Iranian pantheon,⁸⁰ their hymns having been incorporated into the "recent Avesta", might support this thesis. The month *Bâgayâdi* was certainly the month in which the feast of *Baga* usually or often fell. It was on the 10th day of this month in the year 522 BC that (according to the [Behistun inscription, i, 55](#)) the Magian usurper *Gaumata* was killed by Darius and his associates, and his illegitimate rule was overthrown. According to [Herodotus, iii, 79-80](#) (Rawlinson translation, vol. 2, p. 393), this day was celebrated later each year as the feast of *Magophonia* or the day of slaughter of the Magi, on which day the Magians did not dare to show themselves abroad. He says that "the Persians observe this day with one accord, and keep it more strictly than any other in the whole year. It is then that they hold the great festival, which they call *Magophonia*" and he

77. *SBE*, v, p. 199, cf. Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 162.

78. *Baga*, which was originally a general name for gods, seems to have become gradually the name *par excellence* of *Mithra*. The Khwarazmian name for the 16th day of the month is, according to B.'s list, *Figh*, which corresponds to the day of *Mihr* in the Persian calendar.

79. According to Stuart Jones (*ERE.*, vol. 8, p. 752, on Mithraism), *Mithra* is identified with *Shamash* in a tablet from the library of Assurbanipal (*R.*, iii, 69, 1, 72).

80. The [Yasht, 10](#), however, makes *Mithra* almost equal in power to *Ahura Mazda* and the ally of the latter.

81. *ERE*, s.v. *Festival*.

82. According to Neugebauer's *Hilfstafeln zur technischen Chronologie*, Kiel, 1937.

83. According to a calculation based on the *Zodiakaltafel* of Schram.

84. We may also suppose that the 10th day of the Old-Persian month corresponded not to the 10th but to the 11th day of the Babylonian month, as a difference of one day is always possible owing, no doubt, to the different time of the first visibility of the new moon in Babylon and Hamadan. The correspondence between this day and the equinox will then be

hold the great festival, which they call *Magophonia*", and he asserts that "this day is the greatest holy day that all Persians alike keep" (AD Godley's translation, vol. ii, pp. 103-4). It is very probable that the day chosen by the conspirators for carrying out their plot against the usurper was the same day as the great national feast of *Baga* worship, when the court was expected to indulge in pleasure and was less on its guard. We may, therefore, conclude that the *Magophonia* of Herodotus (and Ctesias) and the festival of *Baga* worship (or **Bagayâda* according to Marquart's deduction) was in 522 BC on one and the same day, owing to the said coincidence of dates, as Gray is inclined to suppose.⁸¹ But there is no need to assume that the two words were identical, the former (*Magophonia*) being a misunderstood or misspelt form of the latter (**Bagayâda*) as Marquart has proposed. As a matter of fact, the tenth day of *Bâgayâdi* which corresponded to the tenth or eleventh day of the Babylonian *Tishrîtu* was in 522 BC on or about autumnal equinox. The tenth day of *Tishrîtu* was in that year the 29th of Julian September,⁸² whereas the equinox was on the 30th of the same month.⁸³ If *Gaumata* was killed on the eve of the festival, this latter can be supposed then to have been on the 11th of *Bâgayâdi*, i.e. exactly on the day of the equinox.⁸⁴ Therefore it seems to me reasonable to suppose that the great feast of *Baga* with which the later (Y.A.) *mithrakana* and the modern *Mihragan* or *mihrijân* was certainly identical, was originally the day of the autumnal equinox. This equinox must then necessarily have fallen on the 16th day of the Y.A. month *Mihr* (the seventh month), at the time of the adoption of that Old-Persian festival in the new Y.A. calendar. This was, as a matter of fact, exactly the case in the years 445-442,⁸⁵ when the first of *Frawardin* was on 17th March, or ten days before the vernal equinox, and the autumnal equinox on 28th September.

It was most probably about this time that the **bagayâda* feast of the Old-Persian calendar was taken into the Y.A. year and was renamed *Mithrakân*. It is very natural to conjecture that this adoption was part of the calendar reform through which the Y.A. calendar replaced the system of the Old-Persian time reckoning. Thus again the Mazdayasnian month containing the feast of *Mithra-baga* was named after that deity *Mithrahe-Mihr* in the Persian calendar, and for the same reason the corresponding Armenian month bore the name of *Mehekân*, the Cappadocian month that of *Mithri* and the Khwarazmian month that of *Omirê*. The Sogdians, however, kept for this month in their parallel calendar a form of the Old-Persian name, calling their seventh month *bagakânc* (Arabicized *faghakân*).

Now taking the equinox of autumn as the starting point for the division of the year into four equal parts, as according to Epping⁸⁶ the Babylonians used to do, and putting it on 16th *Mihr* in one of the four years between 445 and 441, the conventional solstice

complete. Moreover, according to the narrative of [Herodotus \(iii, 78\)](#) Darius killed *Gaumata* in darkness, when he was hesitating to strike him lest *Gobryas* should be hit, and Ctesias (Excerpt. Pers., § 14) says that the usurper was sleeping with his Babylonian concubine. Again [Herodotus says \(iii, 79\)](#), that the conspirators after killing *Gaumata* went out and called the people to massacre the Magians..., that the slaughter continued [the whole day], and that if the night had not fallen no Magian would have been left alive. Now from all these facts it can be deduced that the day of the massacre of the Magians or *Magophonia* was, in fact, the day following that of the actual slaying of the usurper.

85. If we take into consideration the fact that the Persian, of the fifth century BC did not obtain in their astronomical calculation the same exact result which we have today, the possibility of their error of one day would be easily conceivable. This can account for four years' difference, if the date of the adoption of the calendar was really 441 and not one or two years earlier. Strictly speaking, in 441, the 16th day of *Mihr* corresponded to 27th September.

86. It is true that Kugler (*Sternkunde*, vol. i, pp. 173-4, and several other places of this book) contests this assumption and suggests that the starting

day⁸⁷ would fall strictly in the middle of Tir, which is the traditional *maidyošahem*, but the real solstice would fall on the 14th or 13th day of the month, i.e. on one of the famous *Tiragan* feasts, the Greater or the Lesser respectively, which may have been connected in origin with this correspondence. The conventional winter solstice would fall on the 16th or 17th day of the month Dai (the real solstice on 15th Dai), perhaps corresponding to the feast of *Gâv-guthil* (?) = ### which was also on the first day of the *gahambar* of *maidyarem* and *paitishahem*, the Avestan time of harvest in Iran, would fall on the 14th September (Julian), i.e. a fortnight before the end of the summer. In 441 the above-mentioned correspondence was in some cases perhaps less strict than in the others, but the difference was in each case only one day.⁸⁸

point for the division of the year into four equal parts (each 91.25 days) was the spring equinox. He is of the opinion that since the Babylonian ephemerides always used to put the vernal equinox four to five days later than its real place, the summer solstice (91.25 days after that conventional but wrong equinox day) fell a little later than the real solstice and the autumnal equinox (182.5 days later) fell incidentally quite in its right and astronomical place. But the result is, nevertheless, the same. It is even possible to suppose that the Babylonians, attaching special importance to the autumnal equinox, tried to keep that point in its strict place, and in order to effect this they placed the day they fixed for the vernal equinox a few days later, so that it would fail exactly two quarters or 182.5 days before the astronomical autumnal equinox. This peculiar arrangement, it is true, is noticed only in the cuneiform documents relating to the second century BC, but there is no reason to think that the same process was not in use in older times.

87. With the fusion of the Old-Persian and Young-Avestan calendars into one system about 441 BC, it is possible that a good many of the characteristics of the Old-Persian calendar, which was in many respects a copy of the Babylonian calendar, were incorporated into the new system. For instance, the adoption of the ordinary four seasons (not as substitutes for their own seasons but as a parallel system) may be one of the effects of this fusion. Also the Babylonian way of beginning the spring and summer some days later than the astronomical points (see the note *supra*) may have been followed by the Iranians, and therefore they may have considered the beginning of summer to be conventionally on 15th Tir, i.e. two days later than the real solstice.

It is a curious fact that many of the feasts connected with, and owing their origin to, the solar seasons and astronomical points of the year, have been transferred to the vague year, being detached from the tropic or fixed solar year, and attached to the civil year. Consequently they have remained in their original places in the latter, free from the effect of intercalation, and have receded against the tropic year about one day each four years. But though they have lost their true and original significance, nevertheless they continued to be celebrated always as marking the points they had originally occupied at the time of the official introduction of the Mazdayasnian calendar.⁸⁹ Besides *Mihragan*, *Tiragan*, and *Gâv-guthil* (?) we have in the Persian feast *Sada*, in both *Adar-jashn*, in *Ajgâr* and two or three other Khwarazmian festivals, as well as perhaps in the Sogdian *Mâkhîrajs* and *Amas khwâreh* (?) = ### (all described by Biruni), the same phenomena. This means that they are symbolic festivals surviving to mark the original seasonal points of the year, but no longer corresponding to them. Biruni distinguishes these feasts from the true season-festivals by calling them non-religious and the latter religious feasts.⁹⁰ In spite of losing their original significance, the former have kept curiously enough some traces of that character.⁹¹ The *Sada* even literally has preserved the meaning relating to the original place of that festival, for the word means "the hundredth", and it was so named because of its having been originally on the hundredth day of the Zoroastrian winter which is five months, from the beginning of *Aban* to the end of *Spandarmad*. This feast was on the first day of the last third of winter, corresponding originally to 20th January (new style)⁹² which is the first day of the second month of the astronomical winter (Aquarius) and the beginning of the severest part of the cold season in Iran. The Pahlavi commentary of the *Vendidad* (i, 4) expressly says that the month *Vohuman* (of course, the *vihêjakîk* month) is the season of the severest cold and that it is the heart of the winter. The above facts prove that the *Sada*, contrary to Biruni's statement (AB. Istanbul complete manuscript), was not instituted by Ardashir, but was rather a feast of much older origin.

It is also interesting to notice that traces of the historical events connected with **bagayâda* or *Magophonia*, namely the deliverance of Persia from the yoke of a detested usurper (Gaumata) by a popular prince (Darius), are preserved (as Marquart has already remarked) in the Iranian tradition in the form of the legend of the blacksmith Kavehi and the noble prince

88. If we put the date of the adoption of the new official calendar in 441 BC, the summer solstice would fall exactly on 15 Tir, but *Mihragan* would precede the autumnal equinox by one day.

89. The same process we find in the *Avardadsal* feast of Indian Parsis, which is celebrated now on the 6th day (the day of *Hordad* or *Amurdad*) of the month of *Spandarmad* (the 12th month) and which, no doubt, was created to mark the place of Nawruz in the non-intercalated (so-called *Kadimi*) year after the Parsis had executed an intercalation of one month in the twelfth century (see Kharegat, in *Modi's Memorial Volume*, p. 115).

90. The same distinction is described in *Denkard*, iii, see recent translation by Nyberg in his *Texte zum Mazdayasnian Kalender*, Uppsala, 1934, pp. 30-39.

91. At *Mihragan*, winter clothes were distributed by the kings, at *Tiragan* people bathed in the rivers, in the first and second *Adar-jashn* they lit fires in their houses, at *Sada* they used to light fires in open places, and the Khwarazmians used the civil feasts as points for the calculation of their agricultural operations even in the tenth century.

92. Or to 15th January, if we take the epagomenae in calculation and assume it was at the end of *Spandarmad*.

93. AB., p. 222. The *Shah-nameh* of Firdausi, however, puts this event on the first day of Mihr. Had the Y.A. calendar been in use at that time, this day would have fallen in 522, only three or four days after the equinox.

Faridoon (*Thraetaona*), delivering Iran from the monstrous usurper Azhi-dahaka on the *Mihragan* day, as is related by Biruni and others.⁹³ Similarly in the traditions relating to some of the other famous Iranian festivals, a vague memory of some ancient historical adventures of national importance seems to be preserved. For instance, *Tiragan* (the 13th day of the month Tir) is, according to the traditions, the day on which the Iranian nation was delivered from the Turanian domination under Afrasiyab (*Franrasyan*,⁹⁴ and *Gâv-guthil* (?)) or the 16th Dai was the day when Eranshahr was freed from the Turks and Faridoon returned the cow of Athfiân (*Athwya*) to its legitimate owner after dethroning and imprisoning of Bivarasf (Baevaraspa).⁹⁵

It is at the same time also possible, and even probable, that while the feast of *Baga* or the equinox day in the years after 522 BC did not, of course, regularly fall on the 10th or 11th day of the Old-Persian month *Bâgayâdi*, and oscillated between 16th of the same month and 16th of the Old-Persian month preceding it (Babylonian *Elûl*), nevertheless the 10th (or 11th) day of *Bâgayâdi* was still kept as another popular feast and was celebrated regularly in the old Persian luni-solar calendar (presumably from 522 till 441 BC), now not as a festival in honor of *Baga* or as the beginning of autumn, but only as the anniversary of the overthrow of Magian rule. Thus both movable and immovable feasts continued to be observed side by side until about 441 BC when the Y.A. took the place of the Old-Persian calendar (the latter ceasing to exist). On this occasion both feasts were transferred to the Mazdayasnian year, and were fixed on the corresponding days of this year. The *Baga's* feast (or **Bagayâda*) became the famous *Mihragan* (the lesser) on the 16th day of Mihr, to which it corresponded in 441, and the *Magophonia* (or as one can say in modern Persian *Maghushân*), the 11th day of *Bâgayâdi*, which at that time (441) corresponded exactly to the 21st day of Mihr (3rd October), became *Râm-rûz*⁹⁶ or Greater *Mihragan*. This explains the tradition which makes *Râm-rûz* the day of the actual capture of Azhi-dahaka [Zohak] by Faridoon, whereas it attributes to *Mihragan* only the spreading of the first news of the rising of Faridoon against the tyrannical usurper. The feast of *Baga* used probably to be celebrated for five days, and Herodotus' story of five days continuation of the uproar after the Magi was killed, might be considered as confirmation of this. Since these five days fell incidentally in 441 just on the interval between this feast and *Magophonia*⁹⁷ the two feasts may have been linked together and made into one feast of five days with the first and last days as great festivals. The mention of both feasts by *Ctesias*⁹⁸ separately, however, points to a posterior date for this fusion.⁹⁹

5. The date of the second reform of the Y.A. calendar when the New Year's Day was fixed near the vernal equinox, and the practice of the intercalation of one month each 120 years was

94. *AB.*, p. 220.

95. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

96. In fact, Ram is the name of the 21st day of every Zoroastrian month, but the compound word as the name of a feast is only used for 21st of Mihr.

97. The equinox was on 28th September and the 10th day of *Bâgayâdi* on 3rd October.

98. *Persica*, § 15, and in Athenæus, x, 434 (Charles Burton Gulick's English translation, iv, 469).

99. B. attributes, this set to the Sasanian king Hormuz (Ohrmazd IV, 578-590), *AB.*, p. 224.

instituted, is more likely to have been a year on which the beginning of the corresponding Babylonian year (*rêsh-shatti*) or the great feast connected with it (*Zagmûg-Akitû*) fell not far from the same equinox. Out of the years in the first decade of the second half of the fifth century BC, which are more or less suitable in other respects, only the years 441, 446, and 449 agree with this condition. The Babylonian New Year's Day in 441 was only four days after the equinox day (30th March), in 449 it was three days after that point (29th March), and in 446 it coincided exactly with the first day of Spring (26th March). In each of the remaining seven years the interval between the two (*Zagmûg* and the equinox) was much longer. For example in 443 this interval was twenty-six days. Of the three years suitable in this respect, the year 441 possesses other advantages also, as we have seen. Moreover in 441 the Babylonian New Year's Day, if it did not fall on the real equinox, corresponded according to their own compilation, to their conventional equinox, which was probably also fixed in the same year on the 30th March.

6. The feast of *Mihragan* was, in almost all Persian and Arabic literature, always generally considered as the first day of autumn. There are innumerable examples of this, which would take us too far afield to quote here. This is not only the case in the writings of the later part of the eleventh and the earlier part of the twelfth century of the Christian era, when *Mihragan* had reached again to the first weeks of autumn, but also in much earlier and later periods one meets with the word used in the same meaning. This popular meaning given to the word and the feast is, no doubt, reminiscent of its original place.

7. The *Frawardigan* feast (Pahlavi *Fravartîgân*) or the feast of manes celebrated in memory of the dead, when according to the Avesta and the Zoroastrian literature the souls of the pious people (*fravashis*) visit their former homes, must have been since the composition of [Yasht 13](#) of the Avesta, at least, identical with the *gahambar* of *hamaspathmaidem* near the vernal equinox. The *gahambars*, though probably only one day originally, were from time immemorial celebrated for five days by the Zoroastrians, the four preceding days being added to the principal feast day, as we find in all Mazdayasnian traditions, but none of them were more than five days. Now if *hamaspathmaidem* and *Frawardigan* were both originally the same as one of the *gahambars*, as this is implied by the above-mentioned verse of the Avesta, then how is this fact to be reconciled with the assigning of ten days (or strictly ten nights) in the Avesta ([Yt. 13.49](#)) for the "flying of the souls all around their villages" and with the traditional practice of the Zoroastrians, who celebrated the feast of manes (*Frawardigan*, or perhaps more correctly *Fordîgân*) for ten days not only from the Arab invasion up to the present day, but also in the Sasanian period? ¹⁰⁰ Biruni tells us that a controversy having arisen among

100. Menander Protector relates that the Byzantine Ambassador John sent by Justin II in 565 to Persia was obliged when on his way to the Persian court to halt for ten days in the town of Dârâ, because of the celebration in Nasîbîn of the feast of manes, which Menander calls *Furdigân*, or according to Causin's translation *Furdiga* (*Histoire de Constantinople depuis le règne de l'ancien Justin, jusqu'à la fin de l'empire, traduit sur les originaux Grecs par Mr. Causin, Paris, 1672; les Ambassades ... écrites par Menandre, Chapitre xii, p. 56*). In that year third feast was certainly on 22nd February-4th March.

the Zoroastrian, as to which of the two pentades, the last five days of the month preceding the *Gatha* days or the latter group itself, was the real *Frawardigan*, they decided to add both fives together and to make the *Frawardigan* ten days, and thus this feast became, by compromise, longer than it originally was. He states further that the second five, i.e. the *Gatha* days or *Andargâh* has superiority over the first. This controversy, if it really took place, could hardly have occurred after the composition of the *Frawardin Yasht*, which, as stated above, mentions the ten days of the souls' visit.

The question can be solved without much difficulty if we suppose that the final composition of *Yasht 13* was posterior to 441 BC, which supposition, owing to the fact that the reverence of *fravashis* was in all probability a part of the popular belief admitted later into the religion, rather than of pure Zoroastrianism, seems to be reasonable. We may then assume that the feast of *hamaspathmaidem* which was in the last days of Spandarmad or of the Avestan month corresponding to this perhaps later name, was mainly a rural festival placed towards the end of the winter and immediately before the Avestan "summer," and that it was perhaps connected at the same time with some offering, liturgy, or some sort of religious ceremony (possibly also some remembrance of the dead), but that *Frawardigan* was the name of the five supplementary days of the year introduced on the model of the Egyptian epagomenae when the Egyptian system was adopted and the Y.A. calendar replaced the Old-Avestan. Accordingly these epagomenae called also *Andargâh*, *Gatha* days, *Panjak veh*, *Dûzîtak*, *Turuftak* and *Panjeh Duzdâda* (Arabic *al-khamsat al-mustariqat*) were originally at the end of the month Adar and immediately before the month Dai, i.e. exactly where the Egyptian supplementary days stood. These days were consecrated, as they were in Egypt, to the reverence of the souls of the departed faithful (*fravashis*). Later, when through the second reform (about 441), the epagomenae were transferred to their well-known place between the end of Spandarmad and the beginning of *Frawardin*, some doubt may have arisen as to the question of the celebration of one of the two consecutive pentads as the *Fravashi's* feast. To avoid any negligence in religious duties, the religious authorities may have added both together and made the *Frawardigan* ten days.¹⁰¹ The divergence of opinion on this matter, however, did not cease, if one is to judge from the different descriptions given in Pahlavi, Arabic, and Persian books.¹⁰² However, the later sources such as the *Bundahishn* and Biruni's books consider the last five days of the year, i.e. the *Gatha* days, as the *hamaspathmaidem gahambar* and also the real *Frawardigan* perhaps contrary to their origin but as a natural consequence of the 6th *gahambar* coming necessarily immediately before *Frawardin*.

101. The gradual extension of the religions festivals or mourning days is not a rare thing, and there are many examples of this in Persia in the last centuries. B. says (*Chronology*, Istanbul MS.) that the learned men and kings of Iran have made *Frawardigan* the greatest of all feasts and have added to it three days more for the manifestation of their devotion, beginning it with the day *Dai-pa-Den* (the 23rd). In later ages this feast became still longer and according to Karkaria in *Dastur Hosheng's Memorial Volume* some Parsis have extended it to seventeen or eighteen days, and there was in the last century a good deal of discussion among the Parsis as to the real length of the festival.

102. The Pahlavi book, *Mainog-i Khrad*, which is believed to have been composed about the end of the sixth century, mentions this feast as consisting of five days.

The Young-Avestan Calendar after the Second Reform

The Zoroastrian vague or civil year continued to be in general use in Persia among the people, from its introduction down to the Islamic period. It was adopted in very ancient times, and perhaps immediately after its official introduction into the Persian empire, by a good many of the neighboring peoples. In Khwarazm its use goes back probably even to still older times, when the year still began with the month Dai, as the above-mentioned order and length of the Khwarazmian *gahambars* show. The use of the name *Faghakân* for the Sogdian month corresponding to the Persian month Mihr is also a proof of the antiquity of the use of this calendar by that people. The same is true of the Armenians, whose tenth month is called *Marieri*, so named according to Marquart after *maidyarem*, certainly at a time when this *gahambar* still fell in that month, that is before 321 BC. Their last month is called *Hrotic* < *Frordigân* the famous *Frawardigan* feast which was originally at the end of this month before the said date.¹⁰³ The name of the Persian month Frawardin may have been adopted later when the feast of the souls stood at the end of this month, i.e. between 321 and 201 BC. The name of the fourth month in some of the above-mentioned calendars (e.g. Tir and not Tishtrya), however, may indicate that their model was the Persian copy of the Avestan month, and hence that they were introduced in those countries after 441 BC. Though the use of Y.A. year declined in Islamic times among the Muhammadan Persians, it did not disappear wholly, and it was still used in some districts in the early years of the present century. The Y.A. calendar to which this year belonged was the official means of time reckoning in the Sasanian period and has continued in use as the religious calendar of the Zoroastrians down to the present day. The only changes which this calendar has undergone are: (1) the removal, in Fars and some other provinces by order of the Bûyid kings (possibly Bahâ'ad-dawleh) in AD 1106, of the *Andargâh* from the end of the month Aban, where it stood since the last intercalation, to the end of the year, and (2) the omission of the intercalation after the beginning of the fifth century (except for one intercalation, but this in the civil year) by a limited community, namely the ancestors of the Indian Parsis, most probably in 1131-2 (or 1126).

The Double Intercalation

But if on the one hand Biruni's report as to the double intercalation during the reign of Yazdegird I or of Fîrûz, which involves the repetition of Mihr and Aban, in one year, was based on an authentic tradition, and if on the other hand the passage of the Pahlavi commentary of the *Vendidad* (i, 4) relating to the coldest month of winter¹⁰⁴ really means that the *vihêjakîk* month Vohuman corresponded to the month Shahrewar of the civil year,

103. However, this name indicates the antiquity of the Armenian calendar only if the Armenian *Frawardigan* did not remain fixed at the end of the vague year, as did the Sogdian.

104. The passages in question run as follows: "Those (the two months which are the middle of winter, the heart of winter) now are the months Vohuman, and Shahrewar, that is, the heart of winter, that is it is more severe: although it is all severe, yet at that time it is more severe." I am

the reconciliation of these two facts will not be easy.¹⁰⁵ For, as Paruck has remarked,¹⁰⁶ the correspondence between the *vihêjakîk* month Vohuman and the civil month Shahrewar implies the correspondence of the *vihêjakîk* Frawardin with the civil Aban, whereas the double intercalation involves the assumption that before that operation the civil month Mihr and after it, the civil month Adar, corresponded with the *vihêjakîk* month Frawardin. Therefore the civil Aban could never have concurred with the latter.

indebted to Professor H. W. Bailey the translation of this passage. This may also indicate the age of the said commentary which should have been composed according to the above-mentioned concordance in the fifth century.

105. Unless one supposes that the occasion was the time for the eighth intercalation, that it was the turn for Aban to be repeated, that then the eighth and the ninth were effected together by repeating two months (Aban and Adar), but that the epagomenae were moved forward only one month, i.e. to the end of the month Aban (where they ought to have been placed if there had only been one intercalation) and not to the end of Adar, as was to be expected. That such a process has taken place is not, however, easy to assume, though it is not impossible that it has. In that case the institution of the intercalation system must be put about 560 BC.

106. *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institution*, Bombay, 1937, p. 52.

The explanation may be sought in the fact that while the purpose of the intercalation was originally to bring back the 15th day of the *vihêjakîk* month Tir to the summer solstice (*maidyoshahem*) and the other *gahambars* to their original astronomical places, the popular belief in the equinoctial origin of the New Year, according to Mazdayasnian cosmogony, had gained ground by the fourth century of the Christian era and become generally accepted. Therefore when the seventh cycle of intercalation came to an end in 399, and a new intercalation (the seventh) was due, those responsible for this operation noticed that this intercalation, which ought to have made the first day of the *vihêjakîk* year (the first day of religious Frawardin) correspond with the first day of Aban of the civil (*Oshmurtîk*) year, would not bring it back to the vernal equinox. They found that this correspondence and consequently the right time for the intercalation (if it was to bring the beginning of the ecclesiastical year to the said equinox) was about AD 384. As this time had already passed, and the next occasion, namely about 508, when the first day of Adar would correspond to the equinox, had not yet come, they decided to effect a double intercalation of two months, one for the omitted one of the past and the other in anticipation of the next. Adding

two months, i.e. a second Mihr and a second Aban to the (*vihêjakîk*) year they moved the epagomenae to the end of the civil Aban, where it has remained. The church, however, apparently still considered for some time the civil Mihr (and not Aban) as corresponding to the *vihêjakîk* Frawardin, as this was in fact the real position. After some time, say seventy or eighty years, in the reign of Firuz, it may have been decided to consider the epagomenae the end of the *vihêjakîk* year, and the Mobeds may have resolved to adopt this officially. This decision, or the theoretical adjustment, may be the source of the tradition attributing the last intercalation to the reign of Firuz, reported by Biruni in his later book as mentioned above. From a report in the book *Az-zîj-al-Hâkimî* or the astronomical tables composed (about the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century) by the famous astronomer Ibn Yûnis (Paris, *fonds arabe* 2495 fol. 65b-66a), it appears that astronomical observations were undertaken by the Persians some 360 years before the famous observations under the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mûn about AD 833. This takes the date of the Persian observations back to about 472 and the reign of Firuz. This may also have had some connection with the above-mentioned reform or adjustment in that reign. If, however; both of Biruni's reports as to the last intercalation, according to one of which it took place in the reign of Yazdegird I, and according to the other in the reign of Firuz, should prove to have been based on old and authentic sources, it seems to me this can only be explained by supposing two kinds of fixed year to have been in use. This means that while the stable year, which was most probably a sidereal year, was kept fixed as strictly as possible by some circles (probably by the Mobeds for religious purposes) it was counted by others (perhaps by the State for financial matters) roughly as 365.25 days, like the Julian year of the Romans. Consequently an intercalation of one month each 120 vague years was necessary to keep this last kind of year fixed, whereas to stabilize the first one (held to be about 365 d. 6 h. 13 m.) the intercalation of one month each 116 (or 115) years would have sufficed. Starting from the year 441 BC the seventh 120th yearly intercalation (which was at the same time a double one) ought to have taken place, as stated above, in AD 399, i.e. the beginning of the reign of Yazdegird, but the seventh 116th (or sometimes 115th) yearly intercalation would have been executed about thirty years earlier, and the eighth one would have been effected about AD 485, i.e. towards the end of the reign of Firuz.

The existence of different estimates for the length of the solar year in Persia may be inferred from the different statements of the *Bundahishn* on this point. This book gives the said length in chapter 5 (Nyberg, *Pahlavi Texte ...*, p.29) as 365 d. 5 h. and some minutes (or a fraction of the hour).¹⁰⁷ In chapter 25, however, the same book contains the statement that the length of the year or "the revolution of the sun from Aries to the end of the

107. This fraction of day might have been made in practice a round number of hours, i.e. six hours or a quarter of a day.

108. Both Abû Ma`shar and Kharaqî give the number in the terms of an arc of the celestial

months" was 365 d. 6 h. and some minutes. This last estimation is also given in the *Denkard* (ibid., pp. 19 and 31). According to Biruni (AB., p. 119) the length of the year was considered by the Persians to be 365 d. 6 h. 13 m. and according to Abû Ma'shar of Balkh (ninth century) quoted by Sajzî (Brit. Mus. MS. Or. 1316, fol. 79) the fraction was held by them to be 6 h. 12 m. 57 s. 36 th. The same is given by Kharâqî (twelfth century) in his book *Muntahâ al-idrâk* (Berlin Ms.).¹⁰⁸

sphere, which converted into time would make the number mentioned above.

It was according to Hamza of Isfahin (tenth century) 6 h. 12 m. 9 s. (AB., p. 52) and according to 'Abd ar-rahmân al-Khâzin (twelfth century) in his *Az-zîj al-mu`tabar as-Sanjari* (Vatican Ms. fol. 21) only 6 h. 12 m. This fraction which agrees nearly with the fraction of the sidereal year as calculated by the Babylonians, namely 6 h. 13 m. 43 s. would need the intercalation of one month each 116 years and sometimes 115 years (if the fraction should be taken as 6 h. 13 m.). As a matter of fact, this kind of intercalation (116-yearly) was practiced in ancient Iran according to *Kitâb al-awâ`il* of 'Askarî quoted by Safadî in his *al-wâfi bil-wafayât* (JA. 10^{ième} série, tome xvii, 1911, p. 278). The same process is reported also by the author of the *Ta'rîkh-i Qum* (of which the Arabic original was composed about 984), by al-Kharâqî, and by al-Khâzin in their above-mentioned books, and by Biruni (AB., p. 11).

The suggested existence of two fixed years, however improbable it may be, would explain not only the two different dates of the last intercalation, but also the two different periods of 120 and 116 years for the operation given in the above-mentioned sources. The tradition regarding the stabilization of the year by the government by means of intercalation for keeping a fixed time for "opening the tax collection" may also confirm the existence of a fixed year in the affairs of the State.

Note. -- The theory proposed above, of the two reforms of the calendar necessarily involves the assumption that on the occasion of the second reform the epagomenae, though they were put at the end of the month Spandarmad, were not removed in the same year from the end of the month Adar where they had stood up to that time. This means that in that year both months had at their end five supplementary days. It is not incredible to attribute such accuracy, which was also necessary for keeping the strict correspondence existing at that time between the Persian and the Egyptian months and days, to the king's astronomers in Babylon, though the above point was neglected on the occasion of the first intercalation (due in 321 BC).

* * * * *

Conclusion

The history and development of the Iranian calendar may be recapitulated according to the theory laid down in this article as

follows: --

An original Aryan or the earliest Iranian calendar, belonging to the period when that race was possibly inhabiting the most northerly steppes between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, a land of severe cold, may be inferred from the Avestan verse ([Vendidid. 1.2-3](#)) which makes the year consist of a winter of ten months and a summer of two (still rather cold) months. At a later period, probably under the influence of a milder climate in the regions occupied by the same people in their southward movement, the adoption of a new division of the year, into two equal parts from one solstice to the other, similar to the Vedic *ayanas*, can be deduced from the two old season festivals, marking the beginning and the middle of the year, and the first of them meaning mid-summer. Still later, owing to the change of climate, experienced as a result of the said movement, the summer was made still longer by adding to it the last fifteen days of the astronomical winter as well as the first fortnight of autumn at the beginning and end respectively. Gradually further divisions of the year were introduced until five seasons were instituted.¹⁰⁹ Thus the summer of seven months ran from *hamaspathmaidyem* to and the winter of five months from the latter to the former *gahambar*. This calendar we have called Old-Avestan.

Another calendar of the Babylonian type has also been in use from ancient times among the south-western section of the Iranian race, who, coming in contact with, and under the influence of Elamite and Assyro-Babylonian culture, had apparently adopted some of its institutions. Their year was a luni-solar one, almost exactly corresponding to the Babylonian in every respect, except perhaps in the beginning of the year, which was probably around the autumnal equinox instead of the vernal. This practice of beginning the year with autumn was either brought by this south-western people from their original home, the cradle of the Iranian race, where it may have been in use among some of the oldest representatives of that race or in a certain period of their history, as Marquart is inclined to suppose, or it was introduced in imitation of the system of time-reckoning of some south-western people (Elamites or some of the Sumero-Babylonian cities) whose year also may have begun with autumn.

The Zoroastrian religion which had appeared among the eastern Iranians, whom we may conveniently call the *Avestan people*, probably in the earlier part of the sixth century BC,¹¹⁰ gradually spread among other Iranian peoples also, and may have had a considerable number of followers in *Parsa* as well as in the other provinces of Iran. The Old-Avestan calendar became the religious calendar of the followers of Zoroaster everywhere, including the communities in the south and west. With the opening of direct relations between Iran and Egypt after the conquest of the latter country by Cambyses, and particularly after the establishment by Darius of friendship between the two

109. *maidyozaem*, as stated above, was in all probability the last to be introduced.

110. I follow the Zoroastrian tradition which puts the coming of the religion 258 years before Alexander's conquest of Persia, though I am aware of the controversy concerning this question.

111. It is, however, also possible, though not very probable, that this process of two successive reforms was in reverse order, i.e. that first the

nations, the Zoroastrian community probably changed their somewhat complicated Old-Avestan calendar for the much simpler Egyptian year, which had only a round number of days without fraction, and was not subject to any intercalation. This change must have taken place in the later part of the sixth century BC. The strict copying of the Egyptian calendar, except in the month names and religious festivals, involved the fixing of the beginning of the year in the month Dai, which was at that time about the winter solstice. The year, now becoming vague began to move backward in the tropical year, and consequently the places of religious season festivals (*gahambars*) were changing in each year. This instability, which was certainly noticed after some years, say half a century, became striking, and was further very inconvenient for the Mobeds. The priests then found it necessary to prevent this variation in the positions of the holidays by inventing a fixed year for religious purposes and especially for keeping the *gahambars* in their seasonal places. This sort of year, called *vihêjakîk*, which was in actual use in religious circles and was by no means a wholly fictitious year, as some seem to believe, was created through the institution of an intercalation of one full month in each cycle of 120 (or 116) years. It is reasonable to assume that this reform, together with the alteration in the date of the beginning of the year from the Egyptian New Year's Day to approximately the Babylonian new year, (i.e. around the vernal equinox), may have taken place simultaneously with the conversion of the Achaemenian kings to the Zoroastrian faith. The traditional places of the *gahambar* in the year which are, no doubt, the positions these festivals held at the time of their stabilization, point to the date of this reform being about 441 BC.¹¹¹

State and the Achaemenian court adopted the Egyptian system in place of their Old-Persian calendar and that subsequently the Zoroastrian community also adhered to it.

GLOSSARY of Zoroastrian terms

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Abbreviations:

Ar.	Arabic
Av.	Avestan
Guj.	Gujarati
OP.	Old Persian
Paz.	Pazand
Pers.	Persian
Phl.	Pahlavi
Skt.	Sanskrit

A

Aban (Phl., Pers.):

water; name of a [yazad](#) presiding over water; name of the tenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the eighth month.

ab-zohr (Phl.):

lit. "libation to the waters"; a section of the [Yasna](#). (Y62.11-Y70).

Achaemenian:

the dynasty which ruled Iran from the time of Cyrus the Great (559 B.C.) to the invasion of Alexander the Great (330 B.C.) (Var. 'Achaemenid')

Adar:

fire; [yazad](#) presiding over fire; name of the ninth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: Pah. 'atash, atesh, adur', Av. 'Atar')

Adar Burzin (Phl.):

one of the three greatest sacred fires of Zoroastrianism (the other two being 'Adar Farnbag' and 'Adar Gushasp'). It was placed in a temple by [Kay Vishtasp](#) himself, after it had 'revealed many things visibly, in order to propagate the faith' (GBd 18.14). (Var: 'Adur Burzen-Mihr')

Adarbad Mahrspandan (Phl.):

a Zoroastrian High priest, prime minister of Shapur II (309-379 A.C.)

Aeshma:

See [Eshm](#).

Afrasiyab (Pers.):
 a [Turanian](#) king who repeatedly attempted to overthrow the Iranians. (Var: 'Franrasyab')

afrin (Phl.):
 lit. 'blessing, benediction', specific prayers of blessing (in Pazand).

afrinagan (Phl.):
 a multi-part ceremony of blessing; specific prayers in the [Avesta](#) which are recited during afrinagan ceremonies; a ceremonial vessel in which the sacred fire is tended. (Var: 'afringan, afargan')

agiary (Guj.):
 lit. 'place of fire', a fire temple. The more traditional term is ['Dar-e Mihr'](#) (Var: 'agiari')

Ahriman (Phl.):
 the Devil, lit. 'Hostile/Destructive Spirit'. (Var: Phl. 'Ahreman', GAv. 'Angra Mainyu', YAv. 'Anra Mainyu').

Ahu (Av.):
 spiritual lord or master, often found in conjunction with ['ratu'](#).

Ahunawad:
 name of the first [Gatha](#); name of the first Gatha day.

Ahunwar (Phl.):
 the holiest prayer of the Zoroastrians. It begins with the Av. phrase 'yatha ahu vairyo'. (Var: 'Ahunvar, Ahunawar', Av. 'Ahuna vairyo').

Ahura Mazda (Av.):
 God, lit. 'Wise Lord', the Supreme Being of the Zoroastrians. (Var: Phl. 'Ohrmazd')

Airyaman:
[yazad](#) of friendship and healing.

Airyānem Vaejah (Av.):
 See [Eranvej](#).

Alburz:
 a cosmic mountain, aka 'Haraiti' or 'Hara Berezaiti'; an actual mountain range in northern Iran.

Amahraspand (Phl.):
 lit. 'Beneficent Immortals', the highest spiritual beings created by Ahura Mazda. Sometimes referred to as 'archangels'. Their names are (Phl.): Vohuman, Ardwhisht, Shahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordad, Amurdad. (Var. 'Amashaspand, Amahraspand', Av. 'Amesha Spenta')

Ameretat (Av.)
 see Amurdad.

Amesha Spenta (Av.)
 See Amahraspand.

Amurdad (Phl.):
 lit. 'Immortality', the Amahraspand presiding over the Earth; name of the seventh day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the fifth month. (Var: Av. 'Ameretat', Phr. 'Amardad')

Anagran:
 lit. 'endless light', name of a [yazad](#); name of the thirtieth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; (Var. Aneran)

Andarz (Phl.)
 (lit. 'gnomic, precept') collection of aphorisms, especially of pragmatic advice or moral instruction

Aneran:
 See Anagran.

Angra Mainyu:
 See [Ahriman](#).

anjoman (Pers.):
 association (Var: 'anjuman')

anosharawan (Phl.):
 soul of deceased person, as opposed to [Zinda-rawan](#), a living soul. (Var: 'anosheh-ravan')

ard:
 lit. 'good blessings, rewards', name of the [yazad](#) presiding over blessings; name of the twenty-fifth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: 'Ashishwangh, Arshishwangh', Av. 'Ashi Vanghuhi')

ardafrawash (Phl.):
 lit. '[Asha](#)-possessing [farohar](#)', i.e. the farohar (guardian angel) of a holy person.

Ardashir (Pers.):
 a king of ancient Iran, founder of the [Sasanian](#) dynasty.

Arda Viraf (Pers.):
 a priest of the early [Sasanian](#) period, author of a Pahlavi book which describes his visions of heaven and hell (Var: Phl. 'Ardag Wiraz')

Ardibehesht (Pers.):
 see Ardwahisht.

Ardwahisht (Phl.):
 the Amahraspand presiding over [Asha](#) and fire; name of the third day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the second month (Var. Av. 'Asha Vahishta', Phl. 'Ashwah, Urdwah, Urdibehesht')

Aredvi Sura Anahita (Av.):
 lit. 'strong, immaculate Anahita', name of a female [yazad](#); name of a mythical river. (Var: Arduisur)

Arezahi:
 See [karshwar](#).

Arsacid:
 a royal dynasty founded by Ashk. It is also known as the Parthian dynasty (247 B.C.-226 C.E.)

Asha (Av.):
 a fundamental concept of Zoroastrianism; there is no adequate translation, although the following are often used: World-order, Truth, Right, righteousness, holiness; Ardwahisht (Skt. 'rta')

Asha Vahishta (Av.):
 see [Ardwahisht](#).

ashavan:
 lit. 'possessing [Asha](#)', a righteous or just person or being.

ashem vohu (Av.):
 one of the most sacred prayers of Zoroastrianism, which praises [Asha](#).

Ashk (Phl.):
 founder of the [Arsacid](#) dynasty (Var: 'Arshak', Greek 'Arsaces')

Ashmogh (Phl.):
 An apostate, a heretic. (Av. Ashemaogha)

Ashtad (Phl.):

lit. 'rectitude, justice', name of a [yazad](#) presiding over justice; name of the twenty-sixth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var. 'Arshtat')

Asman (Phl.):
lit. 'sky', name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the sky; name of the twenty-seventh day of the month according to the Zoroastrianism religious calendar.

Astwihad (Phl.):
a demon of death. (Var: Phl. 'Astvihad, Astovidad', Av. 'Astovidhotu, Asto-widhatu')

Aspandiyar (Parsi Pers.):
an early hero of the Zoroastrian religion, son of [Kay Vishtasp](#). (Var. Pers. 'Ispandiyar, Isfandiyar')

atash (Phl., Pers.):
See [Adar](#).

Atash Adaran (Pers.):
the middle grade of consecrated fire.

Atash Bahram (Pers.):
lit. 'victorious fire', the highest grade of consecrated fire.

Atash Dadgah (Pers.):
the lowest grade of consecrated fire.

athornan (Paz.):
a man of priestly class (Var: 'athrawan, athravan').

Avesta (Pers.):
the holy scriptures of Zoroastrianism (Var: Phl. 'abestag, abistag'); the language of the Avesta (Var. 'Avestan');

ayathrem:
feast ([gahambar](#)) of bringing home the herds.

Az (Phl., Pers.):
the demon of greed.

B

baga (Pers.):
God.

Bahman (1) (Pers.):
see [Vohuman](#).

Bahman (2) (Pers.):
name of an [Achaemenian](#) king.

Bahram (1) (Pers.):
See [Warharan](#).

Bahram (2) (Pers.):
name of several kings in Iranian history.

Baj (Pers.)
ritual silence, lit. 'framing', a ritual utterance or prayer which frames an action with the power of the [manthra](#); a high liturgical service (Dron service); the monthly or anniversary day of the deceased.

bandagi (Pers.):
prayer.

barashnom (Phl.):

a major ritual of purification lasting nine days. (Var. 'bareshnum, barashnum, barashnum-i no shab').

baresman (Av.):

see barsom.

barsom (Phl.):

a bundle of twigs, tied together with a date-palm cord, held by the priest during high liturgies. Current practice is to substitute metal wires; grass laid out for the [yazads](#) to sit on. (Var. Av. 'baresman')

behdin (Pers.):

lit. 'of the Good Religion', a Zoroastrian, especially a lay person.

behesht (Pers.):

paradise.

Bhagaria (Guj.):

a group of priests noted for upholding ancient traditions. They are headquartered in Navsari.

bhandar

the central well of the dakhma

Bharucha (Guj.):

a group of priests headquartered in Bharuch.

bi-namaz

lit. 'without prayer', a term for women in menses.

boy (Phl.):

lit. 'offering incense', a ceremony of offering sandalwood and frankincense to the consecrated fire during each of the five watches of the day. (Var. 'bui, nirang-i bui dadan, boy dadan')

Bundahishn (Phl.):

a ninth-century Pahlavi text.

Bushasp (Phl.):

the demon of sloth (Var: Av. 'Bushyasta')

C

Chechast (Phl.)

mythical lake.

Chinwad (Phl.):

a bridge which souls of the dead cross, and where they are judged (Var: Chinvat, Chinvar, Av. Chinavat)

D

daena (Av.):

See [den](#).

daeva (Av.):

See [dew](#).

Dahm (Phl.)

- a [yazad](#) honored on the fourth day after death; the plural, 'dahman' is synonymous with [hamkar](#).
- Dahman Afrin
embodiment of Prayer
- Daitya (Av.):
a sacred river in [Eranvej](#).
- dakhma (Av.):
a tower-like structure on which dead bodies are exposed, also known as 'tower of silence'.
- Damawand (Phl., Pers.):
a famous mountain in Iran tied with Zoroastrianism. (Var: 'Demavand')
- Dar-e Mihr (Pers.):
a lesser fire temple; the area of a fire temple where high liturgies are performed. Lit. 'Place of Mihr (Var. 'Dar-i Mihr')
- dashtan (Phl., Pers.):
menstruation.
- dastur (Pers.):
a high priest (Var: Phl. 'dastwar')
- dawar (Pers.):
a judge. (Var: Phl. 'dadwar')
- Day-pa-Adar:
name of the eighth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar.
- Day-pa-Den:
name of the twenty-third day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar.
- Day-pa-Mihr:
name of the fifteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar.
- den/din (Phl., Pers.):
1. 'religion', 2. 'inner self/conscience', name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the religion; name of the twenty-fourth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: Av. Daena).
- Denkard (Phl.)
a ninth-century Pahlavi text, comprising a major survey of the religion.
- dew (Phl.):
a demon. (Var: 'dev', Av. 'daeva', OP. 'daiva')
- dharma-shala (Guj.):
charitable institution.
- dibache (Pers.)
lit. 'preface', an preliminary prayer (in Pazand) which names the spiritual being that a ceremony is dedicated to. It also names the benefactor and person in whose honor the ceremony is performed.
- dozakh (Pers.):
hell.
- dron (Phl.):
consecrated flat unleavened bread; a service in which bread is consecrated. (Var: 'darun', Av: 'draona, draonangha').
- druj (Av.):
embodiment of evil and pollution, demon of the lie, falsehood. (Var: 'drug', OP. 'drauga')
- druj i nasush (Phl.):

the corpse demon.
duwazdah homast (Phl.):
a high liturgy consisting of 12 sections, where Vendidad and [Yasna](#) is recited. (Var. 'dwazdah-homast, dvazdeh-homast, davazdah hamast')

E

Eranvej:
lit. 'Iranian expanse', home of the Aryans. (Var. 'Eran-wez', Av. 'Airyanem Vaejah, Airyana Waejah')
ervad (Parsi Guj.):
a priest, originally a title used for higher ecclesiastics, currently used to refer to a priest who has undergone the first stage of initiation into priesthood (nawar). (Var: Phl. 'erbad', 'herbad', Av: 'aethrapati')
Eshm:
demon of Fury/Wrath. (Var. Av. 'Aeshma', Phl. 'Xeshm')

F

fargard (Phl.)
lit. 'chapter, section', a term designating sections of the Vendidad and other books of the [Avesta](#). Compare with [kardah](#). (Var. 'fargard')
Faridoon (Pers.):
name of a heroic king of ancient Iran who flourished centuries before Zarathushtra. (Var: Av. 'Thraetaona', Pers. 'Fariydun')
farohar (Pers.):
guardian angel, guardian spirits of the living and dead. (Var: Phl. 'frohar, fravard, fravahr', Av. 'fravashi')
farokhshi (Guj.):
[Parsi](#) name for a ceremony dedicated to the farohars.
farziyat (Ar.):
obligatory prayers said in each of the five watches ('gahs') of the day.
Fasli (Pers., Ar.):
Zoroastrians who follow a religious calendar which intercalculates one day every four years, patterned after the Gregorian calendar. (Compare with [Qadimi](#) and [Shahanshahi](#).)
Firdausi (Pers.):
author of the Persian epic Shah-nama (Book of Kings) in which many Zoroastrian myths are recorded.
fireshte (Pers.):
a spiritual being/angel, used interchangeable with [yazad](#). (Var. 'fireshta, fereshte')
Fradadhafshu:
see [karshwar](#).
Frashegird:

lit. 'making wonderful', renovation of the universe, the last judgment. (Var: Av. 'Frasho-kereti')

fravashi (Av.):
See [farohtar](#).

Frawardigan (Phl.):
the last ten days of the religious calendar, during which the farohars of the departed are remembered, aka All-Souls days, Mukhtad. (Originally 'rozan Frawardigan'.)

Frawardin:
name of the nineteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the first month.

G

gah (Phl., Pers.):
one of the five watches or periods of the day (named 'ushahin', 'hawan', 'rapithwin', 'uzerin', and 'aiwisruthrem'); also 'place' or 'area'. (Var: 'geh')

gahambar (Phl., Pers.):
six major seasonal festivals, named 'maidyozaem' (mid-spring), 'maidyoshahem' (mid-summer), 'paitishahem' (bringing in the corn), 'ayathrem' (homecoming of cattle), 'maidyarem' (mid-winter), and 'hamaspathmaidem' (coming of the whole group [of farohars]). (Var. 'gahanbar')

Gaokerena:
mythical cosmic tree.

garothman (Parsi Guj.):
the 'House of Song', i.e. heaven. (Var: Av. 'Garo-nmana', Phl. 'garodman')

Gatha (Av.):
the five sacred hymns of Zarathushtra (Yasna chapters 28-34, 43-51, 53), part of the [Avesta](#); the five supplementary days at the end of the Zoroastrian religious calendar and the fireshtes presiding over them.

gaw (Phl., Pers.):
name of a [yazad](#) personifying cattle; an ox, bull or cow.

Gayomard (Phl.):
lit. 'mortal life', mythical first man according to some Phl. texts. (Var: Av. 'Gayomaretan')

geh-sarnu (Parsi Guj.):
recitation of the Gathas during a funeral service. (Var: Phl. 'geh-sarna, gahan-srayishn')

gehân
an iron bier on which a dead body is removed

getig (Phl.):
material existence; the world. (Compare with [menog](#).)

getig-kharid (Pers.):
a ceremony of redemption, consisting of the recital of nine Yasna services.

giriban (Pers.):
a small pocket on the throat of the [sudre](#) (sacred shirt), also known as "kissa-e kerfa" (the bag of good deeds) (Pers.).

God:
see [Ahura Mazda](#).

Godavara (Guj.):

one of the Gujarat ecclesiastical groups of priests, serving a large rural area, headquartered in Anklesar.

gomez (Phl.):

(unconsecrated) bull's urine.

Goshorun:

lit. 'the soul of the cow (or settlement)'; name of the fourteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; (Av. Geush Urvan)

Gowad:

See Wad.

H

hamaspathmaidem (Av.):

lit. 'coming of the whole group [of [farohars](#)]', feast of All Souls. (Var. Hamaspathmaedaya)

hamazor (Phl.):

a ritual greeting.

hamistagan (Phl.):

purgatory, a neutral place between heaven and hell where souls go when their good deeds equal their evil deeds. (Var: 'Hameshta-gehan')

hamkar (Phl.):

lit. 'co-workers', associates of the [yazad](#) which presides over the day. The term 'dahman' is also used.

haoma (Av.):

name of a plant with medicinal and spiritual properties; name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the haoma plant. (Var: Phl. 'hom').

Hara:

Mythical mountain. (Var: 'Hukairya')

Hathra:

a measure equal to one-half of a charetu, or about 3.5 furlongs.

Haurvatat (Av.):

see [Hordad](#).

Hawan (Phl.):

name of the second watch ([gah](#)) of each day (sunrise to midday, i.e., 12 noon); a [yazad](#) presiding over the second watch. (Var. 'havan', Av. 'havani')

herbad:

See [ervad](#).

hom (Phl.):

see haoma.

Hooshang (Pers.):

a mythological ruler of ancient Iran, founder of the Peshdadian dynasty, He is credited with the discovery of fire. (Var. 'Hushang', Av. 'Haoshanha')

Hordad (Phl.):

lit. 'Perfection or Health', name of an [Amahraspand](#); name of the sixth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the third month. (Var: Av. 'Haurvatat')

Hormazd (Pers.)

name of various kings of the Parthian and Sasanian dynasties.
Hoshedarmah
one of the future Soshyants.
Hukairya:
See Hara.

I

Ilm-i Khshnoom:
an occult movement within Zoroastrianism.
Indar:
Name of a demon. (Var: Skt. 'Indra')
Iranshah (Pers.)
the oldest sacred fire (Atash Bahram) in India, now in Udvada.

J

Jamasp (Phl.):
an early hero of the Zoroastrian religion. He was King Vishtasp's Prime Minister, and the son-in-law of Zarathushtra. (Var: Av. 'Jamasp')
Jamshed (Pers.):
a famous king of ancient Iran. (Var: 'Jamshid', Av. 'Yima Khshaeta')
jashan (Phl. Pers.):
a frequently-performed religious service, in which an [afrinagan](#) ceremony is performed. (Var: 'jashn', Parsi 'jasan').
jizya:
poll tax levied from non-Muslims.

K

kabiseh:
intercalulation done to keep calendar consistent with seasons
karb:
priest of the old religion. (Var: Av. 'Karapan').
karapan (Av.):
See karb.
kardah:
A section or division of most Yashts and other books of the [Avesta](#). Compare with [fargard](#).
karshwar (Pah.):
one of the seven continents of the earth, named 'Arezahi' (West), 'Sawahi' (East), 'Fradadhafshu' (Southeast), 'Widadhafshu' (Southwest), 'Wouru-bareshti' (northwest), 'Wourujareshti' (Northeast), and 'Xwaniratha' (central). [Eranvej](#) is located in the latter.

kay:
 See Kayanian.

Kayanian:
 a prehistoric dynasty of ancient Iran. (Var: 'kay, kayag, kavi', Av. 'kavaya')

Kay Kaus (Phl.):
 a Kayanian king. (Var: Av. 'Kavi Usan')

Kay Khosraw (Pers.):
 a Kayanian king, grandson of Kay Kaus. (Var: Av. 'Kavi Haosravah')

Kay Kobad (Pers.):
 founder of the Kayanian dynasty. (Var: Av. 'Kavi Kavata.')

Kay Vishtasp (Phl.):
 king of ancient Iran, patron of Zarathushtra. (Var: Av. 'Vishtaspa', Pers. 'Gushtasp')

kem na mazda (Av.):
 an exorcism prayer from the [Avesta](#).

Kersasp (Phl.):
 a king of ancient Iran. (Var: 'Garshasp', Av. 'Keresaspa')

Khambata (Guj.):
 a group of priests, headquartered in Khambat.

kheshm (Phl., Pers.):
 the a demon of wrath.

Khorda Avesta (Pers.):
 the 'Small Avesta', a prayer book with excerpts from the [Avesta](#).

Khordad-sal (Pers.):
 the sixth day of the year.

Khorshed (Parsi Pers.):
 See Khwarshed.

Khshathra Vairya (Av.):
 see [Shahrewar](#).

khshnuman (Phl.):
 lit. 'dedication', a dedicatory section (in [Avesta](#)) naming the [yazad](#) in whose honor a ceremony is performed. There are two types of khshnumans, nani ("shorter"), and wadi ("longer").

khwarrah (Phl.):
 divine grace or glory. (Var: Phl. 'farrah', Av. 'khvarenah', 'khwarenah').

Khwarshed:
 'the shining sun'; name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the Sun; name of the eleventh day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; (Var: Pers: Khurshid)

khwetodas (Phl.):
 next-of-kin marriage. (Var: Av. 'khvaetvadatha')

kriya (Skt.):
 ritual action.

kusti (Pers.):
 sacred cord worn around the waist by Zoroastrians; the short ritual of untying and retying the kusti.

L

Lohrasp (Phl.):

a king of ancient Iran, father of Kay Vishtasp. (Var: Av. "Aurvāt-aspa")

M

magus:

a priest (pl. magi). Compare with "mobed".

mah (Phl., Pers.):

moon; month; name of the twelfth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the Moon.

Mahraspand:

lit. 'Holy Word', name of a [yazad](#) who embodies the Holy Word; name of the twenty-ninth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: Av. 'Manthra Spenta')

maidyarem:

mid-winter feast ([gahambar](#)).

maidyoshahem:

mid-summer feast ([gahambar](#)).

maidyozareem:

mid-spring feast ([gahambar](#)).

Mani (Phl., Pers.):

founder of Manichaeism, a Gnostic religion with Zoroastrian elements, considered an arch-heretic (lived from 216 A.C.-275 A.C.)

manthra (Av.):

Holy Word; specific passages of the [Avesta](#) with specific poetic and spiritual properties. Compare with [Mahraspand](#).

maratab (Ar.):

a ceremony which qualifies a priest to perform higher rituals. Compare with [nawar](#). (Var. 'martab')

margarzan (Phl.):

mortal sin.

Mashye-Mashyane (Phl.):

the first human couple, sprung from the seed of Gayomard, the first man.

Mazda (Av.):

see [Ahura Mazda](#).

Mazdayasni (Av.):

another term for the Zoroastrian religion, lit. "worship of Mazda".

menog (Phl.):

spiritual existence; spiritual world. (Compare with [getig](#).) (Var: Av. 'mainyu')

Mihr (Phl., Pers.):

[yazad](#) presiding over the contract; name of the sixteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the seventh month.

Mihragan (Phl.):

a festival honoring the [yazad](#) Mihr, celebrated on the 16th day of the seventh month.

Minocheher (Pers.):

a king of ancient Iran. (Var: 'Manuchihr', Av. 'Manuschithra')

mobed (Pers.):

a Zoroastrian priest, orig. head priest ('Magu-paiti', master of Magi).

Mukhtad (Pers.?):

see Frawardigan.
myazd (Phl.):
a ceremonial food offering.

N

nahn:
ablution, a ritual washing of the entire body, a higher form of purification than [padyab](#).
nama karana
ceremony for naming a newborn, usually 10-12 days after birth
namaskar (Guj.):
a short prayer of homage. (Var: 'nemaskar')
Nam Stayishn (Phl.):
name of a Pazand prayer praising Ohrmazd, part of the [Khorda Avesta](#).
nasa (Pers.):
dead matter, pollution; demon of putrefaction. (Var: Av. 'nasu', Phl. 'nasush')
nask (Phl.):
lit. 'book, volume,' one of the 21 volumes into which the Avesta was divided in ancient times; a religious service
navjote (Parsi Guj.):
initiation into the Zoroastrian religion, a ceremony of investiture of the [sudre](#) and [kusti](#). Also called 'sedra pushun'.
Navsari (Pers., Guj.):
a town in Gujarat India, a stronghold of Zoroastrianism.
nawar (Phl.):
a four day ceremony which qualifies a candidate for the priesthood. Compare with [maratab](#).
Nawruz (Pers.):
New Years Day. (Var: 'Noruz', 'No Roz')
Neryosang (Phl., Pers.):
name of a [yazad](#). (Av. 'nairyosangha')
nirang (Phl.):
lit. 'formula, spell', a short ritual accompanied by Avestan or Pazand prayers; consecrated gomez.
nirang-i kusti bastan (Pers.):
formula for retying the [kusti](#), this short ritual is a necessary prelude to longer prayer.
nirangdin (Phl.):
name of the most exalted and elaborate of Zoroastrian high liturgies.
niyayesh (Pers.):
one of five Zoroastrian litanies from the [Avesta](#), part of the daily prayers. (Var: 'nyayesh, nyayishn')
nyayesh:
see niyayesh.

O

Ohrmazd (Phl.):

God, the supreme being; name of the first day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: Ormazd, Av. 'Ahura Mazda')

Old Persian:

language of the [Achaemenian](#) empire, recorded in cuneiform inscriptions.

Osta:

lit. 'disciple', a candidate for priesthood. (Av. 'havishta')

Osti:

a woman of priestly family.

P

padan (Pers.)

a white cloth mask used by a priest during ceremonies to keep his breath from directly touching the fire.

padyab (Pers.):

a ritual washing of the exposed parts of the body. Compare with [nahn](#).

padyab-kusti (Pers.):

a ritual ablution followed by the ritual untying and retying of the kusti.

paeward

a ritual connection. To hold a "paiwand" means to be in close contact or touch This is done by holding a piece of cloth or cotton tape by two persons to show that they are associated or joined in doing a thing.

Pahlavi

the Middle Persian language, used between 300 B.C. and 950 A.C, in which many Zoroastrian writings are preserved.

pairika (Av.):

witch, sorceress; shooting star.

paitishahem:

feast (gahambar) of bringing in the harvest.

panchayat:

local association of Zoroastrians.

Palash (Parsi Pers.):

a Parthian king (51-80A.C.). (Var. Greek 'Vologeses I', Phl. 'Walakhsh')

panj tay (Pers.):

a ceremony performed with a 'five-wire' [barsom](#), which is prerequisite for performing any high liturgy for the day. (Var: 'baj of panch tai')

panthak (Guj.):

priestly jurisdiction.

Paoiryō-tkaesha (Av.):

lit. 'primitive doctrine', forerunner of Zoroastrianism. Alternately, one of the first teachers of the Zoroastrianism. (Var: Phl. 'poryotkesh')

Parsis:

Zoroastrians who settled in India. Sg: Parsi. (Var: 'Parsees')

Parthian:

a royal dynasty ruling Iran from 250 B.C.-226 A.C.

patet (Phl.):

prayer of penance (in Pazand).

paywand (Phl.):

lit. 'connection,' ritual contact between persons serving as a shield against pollution.

Pazand (Phl.):

Pahlavi texts in which Aramaic elements are replaced with their Iranian equivalents, transcribed in the Avestan script.

Peshdadian:

the first dynasty of ancient Iran.

Peshotan (Pers.):

an early hero of Zoroastrianism, he was the son of [Kay Vishtasp](#).

Pesho-tanu (Av.):

a 'mortal-sin'; an individual who has committed a mortal sin.

Porseh Ceremony

Memorial Service

Pourushasp (Phl.):

name of Zarathushtra's father. (Var: Av. 'Paourushaspa')

Q

Qadimi (Pers., Ar.):

one of the three movements within Zoroastrianism which observe different religious calendars (the other two are called [Fasli](#) and [Shahanshahi](#)). The Qadimi calendar is one month ahead of the Shahanshahi.

R

Ram:

lit. 'joy', name of a [yazad](#); name of the twenty-first day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar.

Rapithwin (Av.):

the period of the day ([gah](#)) from noon to mid-afternoon; a [yazad](#) presiding over the Rapithwin gah. During five months of the year it is replaced by a second Hawan.

Rashn (Phl.):

lit. 'truth, justice', name of a [yazad](#); name of the eighteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; (Av. Rashnu).

Rashnu (Av.):

see Rashn.

raspi (Pers.)

assistant priest.

ratu (Av.)

judge, often found in conjunction with '[Ahu](#)'. (Var. Phl. 'rad')

rawan (Phl.):

soul. (Var: Av. 'urvan')

riman (Phl., Pers.):

something that has become polluted by contact with dead matter; a ceremony of purification, used by Parsees in place of [barashnom](#) to purify lay persons.

Rivayat (Ar.):

a collection of letters in Persian from Iranian priests in response to questions by their Indian counterparts on a variety of religious topics, written between 1478 and 1773 C.E..

Rustam (Pers.):

a hero of ancient Iran.

S

sada (Pers.)

lit. 'pure, simple,' Avestan texts without Pahlavi commentaries.

sagdid (Phl.):

lit. 'a dog's gaze', this term refers to the practice of exposing a corpse to the gaze of a dog, which is believed to drive away some of the power of the [druj](#).

sagri (Guj.):

a small building near a [dakhma](#) where a fire is kept burning.

Sanjana (Guj.):

a group of priests headquartered in Udvada.

Saoshyant (Av.)

see [Soshyant](#).

Sasanian:

the Zoroastrian dynasty which ruled Iran from circa 226 A.C.-651 A.C. (Var: 'Sasanid')

satum:

meal offering ritual prayer for dead.

Second Hawan:

the third watch ([gah](#)) of each day (noonday to 3 p.m.) during part of the year. Compare with [Rapithwin](#).

sedra-pushun:

see [navjote](#).

Shahanshahi (Pers.):

one of the three movements within Zoroastrianism which observe different religious calendars (the other two are called [Fasli](#) and [Qadimi](#).)

Shahrewar (Phl.):

lit. 'Desirable Dominion', the [Amahraspand](#) presiding over metals; name of the fourth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the sixth month. (Var: Av. 'Khshathra Vairya')

siroza, siruza (Pers.):

lit. '30 days', a prayer from the [Avesta](#) which honors 30 [yazads](#).

Soshyant (Phl.)

the (World) Savior. (Var: Av. 'Saoshyant')

Spandarmad (Phl.):

lit. 'Holy Devotion', the [Amahraspand](#) presiding over the earth; name of the fifth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the twelfth month. (Var: Av. 'Spenta Armaiti')

spenta (Av.)

holy, beneficent.

Spenta Armaiti (Av.):

see Spandarmad.

Spenta Mainyu (Av.):
Holy Spirit. (Var: Phl. 'Spenamino')

Spentomad:
name of the third **Gatha**; name of the third Gatha day.

Spozgar (Paz.):
demon of thunderstorms.

Srosh (Phl.):
lit. 'Hearkening'; name of a **yazad**; name of the seventeenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; a spirit being who guards the soul for three days after death (Var: Av. 'Sraosha')

stum (Parsi Guj.):
a prayer recited on meals in honor of the dead. (Var: 'satum')

sudre (Pers.):
sacred shirt. (Var: 'sudra, sudreh')

sudre-kusti (Pers.):
sacred shirt and girdle.

Syamak (Phl.):
a hero of ancient Iran, son of Gayomard, the first king of Iran. (Var: 'Siyamak')

syaw (Parsi Guj.):
a suit of white clothes consecrated during the Dron service. (Var: 'siav, shiav')

Syawakhsh (Phl.):
name of an ancient Iranian hero, son of Kay Kaus.

T

Tahmurasp (Pers.):
name of an ancient Iranian hero, son of Hooshang.

tana
the ceremony of laying the foundation for a new Dakhma.

tanapuhr (Phl.):
a mortal sin, or a good deed which can balance a mortal sin.

tan-dorosti (Paz., Pers.):
a prayer of benediction (in Pazand).

Tir (Phl.):
see Tishtar.

Tiragan:
Religious celebration in honor of Tishtar.

Tishn (Phl.):
demon of thirst.

Tishtar (Phl.):
the star Sirius; name of the **yazad** presiding over Sirius; name of the thirteenth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the fourth month. (Var: Phl. 'Tir')

Tur (Pers.):
name of an ancient Iranian hero, one of the three sons of Faridoon.

Tura, Turanian:

a foreign tribe mentioned in the [Avesta](#), probably originally Scythian, later applied to all Central Asian nomads.

U

urvan:

soul.

Ushahin:

name of the first watch ([gah](#)) of each day (from midnight to daybreak).

Ushtawad:

name of the second [Gatha](#); name of the second Gatha day.

uthamnu (Guj.):

a communal service performed on the third night after death. (Var. 'Uthamna')

Uzerin:

the fourth watch ([gah](#)) of each day (from 3 p.m. to sunset).

V

Vanant (Av.)

[Yazad](#) of the Star Vega.

Vendidad (Pers.):

one of the books of the [Avesta](#); a high liturgical service in which the Vendidad is recited.

Vishtasp (Phl.):

see [Kay Vishtasp](#).

Vispa Humata (Av.):

a short prayer from the [Khorda Avesta](#) focussing on good thoughts, words, and deeds.

Visperad (Phl., Pers.):

one of the books of the [Avesta](#); a high liturgical service dedicated to [Ahura Mazda](#).

Vohuman (Phl.):

lit. 'Good Mind', one of the [Amahraspands](#); name of the second day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar; name of the 11th month. (Var. Av. 'Vohu Manah')

Vohu Manah (Av.):

see Vohuman.

Vourukasha (Av.):

lit. 'of many bays', mythical ocean.

W

Wad:

lit. 'wind, atmosphere', name of the [yazad](#) presiding over the wind; name of the twenty-second day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var. Gowad, Govad).

wahisht (Phl.):
paradise.

Wahishtoisht:
name of the fifth [Gatha](#); name of the fifth Gatha day.

warasyo (Parsi Guj.):
a consecrated white bull. Its hair is used for ritual purposes. (Var: 'varasyo', Av. 'varesa')

Warharan:
lit. 'victory', name of a [yazad](#); name of the twentieth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var: Pers. Bahram, Behram.)

Wohukshathra:
name of the fourth [Gatha](#); name of the fourth Gatha day.

Y

Yasht (Phl.):
one of the hymns of the [Avesta](#) honoring various spiritual beings.

Yasna (Av.):
one of the books of the [Avesta](#); the name of a high liturgical service in which the text of the Yasna is recited

yatha ahu vairyo (Av.):
the first phrase of the [Ahunwar](#) prayer.

yazad (Phl.):
a created spiritual being, worthy of being honored or praised. Used interchangeably with fireshte. (Var: Ijad, Av. 'Yazata')

Yazdegird (Phl.):
the last [Sasanian](#) king. The Zoroastrian calendars numbers the year based on his reign, and uses the label 'A.Y.' for 'after Yazdegird'.

yenghe hatam (Av.):
one of the most sacred prayers of Zoroastrianism.

Yima (Av.)
See [Jamshed](#).

yozdathregar (Av.):
lit. 'purifier', the priest who administers the [barashnom](#) ceremony of purification. (Var: Av. 'yaozdathregar')

Z

Zam:
lit. 'earth', [yazad](#) presiding over the earth; name of the twenty-eighth day of the month according to the Zoroastrian religious calendar. (Var. 'Zamyad')

Zand:

translation and exegesis. The term 'Zand-Avesta' or 'Zend-Avesta' refers to an edition of the Avesta which has Zand interspersed with the Avesta text. (Var. Zend.)

Zaothra:

libation (Var: Phl. 'zohr')

Zarathushtra (Av.):

name of the founder of Zoroastrianism. (Var: Parsi Guj. 'Zarhosht', Phl. 'Zartosht, Zardusht', Greek 'Zoroaster')

Zarhosht (Parsi Guj.):

see [Zarathushtra](#).

Zend-Avesta:

see Zand.

Zinda-rawan (Pers.):

lit. 'living soul' (as distinguished from anosharawan, the soul of a deceased person); a ceremony honoring the [yazad](#) Srosh on behalf of a living person. (Var, 'Zenda-ravan')

Zohak (Pers.):

a mythical tyrant. (Var. 'Zahhak', Av. 'Azi Dahaka')

Zoroaster (Greek):

see [Zarathushtra](#).

Zoroastrianism:

the religion founded by [Zarathushtra](#) (12th century B.C.), the oldest of the great prophetic religions.

zot (Phl.):

officiating priest.