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Pārsiāna

VOL I Nos 4 and 5

FEB - MARCH 1965

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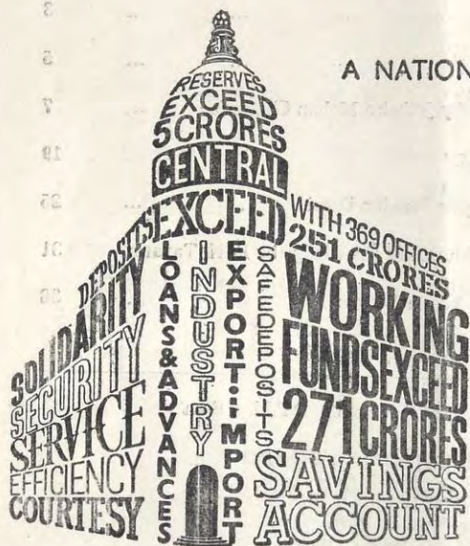
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Editorial

We are glad to announce to our esteemed subscribers that we have now first time broken the vicious circle of delayed publication and hereafter hope to serve them good reading matter in God's good time every month regularly. From the beginning of this publication it has all been a matter of apologies and craving of indulgence and their give-and-take in liberal measures was possible because of the sound common sense of our subscribers, who have seen the need of a medium like Parsiana for Parsis and others interested in the culture of our community. Excepting a few hasty remarks that we should have chosen other trick for swindling the public the going is good. Now everything must be straightened out. We have received a number of complaints from our esteemed subscribers that they have not received December issue i.e. Vol. I. No. 2, of Parsiana. We request all those who have not yet received the copy to write to us, **even if they have already written once**. These are just teething troubles of a new venture. We mean to set them right once and for all. Please cooperate and write to us. We shall promptly attend to you.

This issue includes an important article by Jotindra Mohan Chatterjee, the famous author of the Ethical Concepts of the Gathas. Its careful perusal will well repay the time and labour devoted to it.

Mr. Sapur F. Desai has written several works of importance to our community. Each one of them bears the stamp of indefatigable labour and devotion to the task. His approach to all our problems is through social sciences — an attitude which our community needs most to accept and follow.

Dr. Sohrab Batliwala now joins our Advisory Editorial Board. It is our gain. I have received suggestions from our subscribers to broad-base our Board by inclusion of suitable persons from cities other than Bombay. Matter is postponed by me until our routine is well settled because we believe that all persons who join our Board oblige us by lending us their services under their respected names and we should be able to maintain decorum. Many are anxious to help Parsiana — each in his own way — only we are slow.

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For PARSIANA
Pestonji Byramji Warden
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PICTURE ON THE FRONT PAGE

Maidyomah, the first Cousin and the first disciple follower of Zarathushtra promises Zarathushtra that he (Maidyomah) will protect the Holy Fire and carry the Message of the Prophet everywhere.

NAWRUZ

ITS ANCIENT CUSTOM

by

Dr. Sohrab H. Batlivala, Ph. D.

We Parsis seldom realise that even some of our minor practices and usages have come down to us almost intact from antiquity. The *Nawruz* or the New Year Day is a festival which has defied all ages of the past in preserving its solemn character. In this article, I am describing briefly how it was celebrated in ancient Iran, so as to show that some of the customs, now prevailing among the Parsis, were also current over a millennium back among the Iranians.

AN ARABIC DESCRIPTION OF THE NAWRUZ

Before I describe the ancient aspect of this festival, let me say a few words on my source of information. It may seem strange to lay Parsis that some of the most graphic descriptions of the celebrations of the *Nawruz* are to be found IN ARABIC LITERATURE, ALTHOUGH THE FESTIVAL IS NATIONALLY IRANIAN AND RELIGIOUSLY ZOROASTRIAN. The descriptions happen to be in Arabic simply because a thousand years back Arabic was the language in vogue among the Iranian elite, celebrities and men of letters. The most positive proof that these Arabic descriptions are based on or are merely translations of Pahlavi writings, is the fact that we find therein MANY PAHLAVI WORDS WHICH ARE SUBSEQUENTLY ARABICISED.

The following description is based on a passage from an Arabic work called *Mohsin wal Azdad*, which is a book dealing with the advantages and disadvantages of certain customs and institutions. The description of the *Newruz* which is incorporated in this book by its author, comes from a pure Iranian named KHOSROWI (called in Ara-

bic AL-KISRAWI), who perhaps paraphrased it into Arabic from the PAHLAVI AYIN NAMAK. I shall now draw freely upon this important passage to give the readers an idea of some of the ancient customs prevailing in Iran in connection with the *Nawruz*.

SOME NAWRUZ CUSTOMS

The New Year Day was begun with an auspicious mouthful of fresh pure milk and some fresh cheese. This was considered as a harbinger of happiness. The house would be gaily decorated, people would attire themselves in robes and give receptions to their friends, which would continue for at least two days. Presents would be exchanged and it was customary to inscribe on them words of happy omen such as *afzud*, *afzun*, *afzayed* etc., which signify *increase*, *growth* and *prosperity* in the Iranian tongue. During receptions, it was the practice to place a silver tray with white sugar cubes and fresh cocoanuts before the guests, who would then commence the festivities by partaking of some of these sweets. During the festivity, ROSE-WATER WOULD BE SPRINKLED ON THE GUESTS FROM SILVER VASES, round the necks of which would be placed threads of gold and beads of green chrysolite. This was done by maidens belonging to humble families and by maid-servants of respectable homes.

In the Royal Palace, festivities would continue until Meher-ruz of the month Farwardin, i.e. the sixteenth day of the first month. Corn would be sown twenty-five days before the *Nawruz* in the yard of the Royal Palace, for the purpose of taking omens. The better the growth and the riper the corn, the richer was the expected

harvest for the coming year. It was considered lucky omen on the part of the King to rest his eyes on the barley crops. The King transacted no affair on that day, fearing lest some evil should happen, in which case, the misfortune might continue the whole year round.

During the later Sassanian period, it was also a custom that when the *Nawruz* fell on a Jewish sabbath, i.e. Saturday, the King would give a present of four thousand Derhams to the Chief Rabbi. This custom was perhaps started by King Yazdegard I who had married a Jewish lady named Susan-

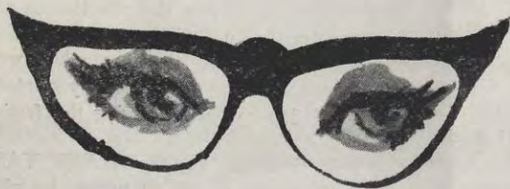
dokht (Vide the Pahlavi book SHATROIHA-I-AIRAN).

SURVIVAL OF THESE CUSTOMS

From this description of the *Nawruz* based on a genuinely Iranian source, it will be seen that the custom of sprinkling rose-water and of presenting cocoanuts and cube sugar prevailing amongst the Parsis at present is really of ancient Iranian origin.

NAWRUZ GREETINGS TO ALL

Let us wish a happy and prosperous *Nawruz* to Parsis, Iranians and all, who love and/or respect ancient Iran, its civilisation and culture.



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(COURTESY and FAIR-DEAL)

Duality of God-head in the Gatha

(A DISCOURSE)

By

Jotindra Mohan Chatterjee M.A.

The Head-line might suggest that I am going to say something about the supposed rivalry between Ahura Mazda and Angra Manyu. Far from that. **The idea of parity between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu is ridiculous.** The bogie was started by some superficial western scholars, who could not enter into the depth of the Philosophy of the Gatha. It deserves a decent burial. For neither can Angra Manyu be called a "God" by any stretch of imagination, nor can Bhagvan Zarathustra be accused of sponsoring the idea of two Gods, any more than Sankara-Charya can. The latter admits the existence of three Gunas, and if that does not turn him into a polytheist, the enunciation of two mainyus by the former, cannot make him so. So the assertion of two Manyus need not be considered as destructive of the severe monotheism of the Gatha.

All the same, some sort of dualism, over or covert, inheres in every religion, however much it may boast of monotheism. **This Dualism is of two varieties** — one is the **Philosophical** and the other is the **Theological**. Philosophical Dualism arises out of the problem as to whether God is an Impersonal or a Personal Entity i.e. (with a slight altera-

tion in the meaning) whether He is Transcendant, or He is Immanent. Theological Dualism takes up the question as to whether God is stern or kind ; in other words, whether He only punishes the sinner, or also forgives him.

Personality implies response to the environment. A Personal God would listen to the prayer of the devotee and try to ameliorate his grief. **An Impersonal God, like an apathetic principle, goes on its own way,** unmindful of the praise or the blame, and the pleasure and the pain, of the votary.

A stern God would give every man his desert, awarding condign punishment to the sinful. A kind God would try to win him over by love.

Hinduism discusses both the problems at some length. In it, the **Impersonal** mood is known as the **Brahma-aspect** of God, and the **Personal** mood as the **Iswara aspect**. Similarly the stern attitude is called the **Aishwarya aspect**, and the kind attitude as the **Madhurya aspect**. Hinduism solves the problem by admitting both the aspects to be true. **Sankara is the champion of the Brahma Aspect, and Ramanuja of Iswara Aspect.** But Ramanuja does not say that Sankara's viewpoint is wrong, he only says that

it does not suffice. Similarly the champions of Madhurya aspect, do not say that God does not punish the wrong-doer, they only add that He sometimes forgives, and that He is full of love, and when He punishes, He does so like a parent, only for the benefit of the transgressor. There is an elaborate discussion in Hindu philosophy on both these points viz. (1) the relation between Brahma and Ishwara, as well as (2) the inevitability of KARMA-FALA (i.e. Justice) and the scope for mercy (i.e. Love). To some people the two alternatives in both the cases are very much contrary, and cannot be reconciled at all. But the large majority of the scholars accept the reconciliation. According to them there is **Mutual Adhayasa (Inter-penetration)** between Brahma and Ishwara, so that they are both separate and one simultaneously. This is not possible in case of physical things, for material objects are exclusive of each other. **But it is the privilege of spirits to be able to inter-penetrate.** Two minds may be so attuned to each other, that one feels the agony of the other, in the same way and to the same extent. Love melts away the barrier between minds and makes them one-in-two. In the matter of punishment (Karma-fala) also, love takes away the poignancy of the infliction. **Oppression that proceeds from the beloved, is no longer oppression.** As the great Jalal expresses it :—

Nalam O tarsam Ki U bawar Kunad
O aj Karam an jor-ra Kamtar Kunad

Masnavi 1-1075

"I complain of violence, and am yet afraid lest he will believe me, and out of

goodness reduce it". I am not here so much concerned with their reconciliation. My purpose is only to point out that both the sets of ideas, are current in Hindu religious literature, as also are those of (1) the idea of Brahma and the idea of Iswara and (2) the idea of Justice (Aiswarya) and the idea of Love (Madhurya).

Let us see what Gatha has to say in the matter.

If I state that I find traces of the Brahma cult in the Gatha, I would draw on my head, a chorus of condemnation and curse. Orthodox pundits would rush out to prevent the sacrilege, and intercept my wanton mis-interpretation of the Gatha. There is some justification for such action. The Brahma-cult, with all its merits is inimical to what we popularly understand by Religion. Apathetic Brahma is heedless of the prayers and petitions of the devotee. He is quite colourless, and may not be said to feel kindly towards anybody. The agonies of his innumerable creatures do not move him an inch from his settled course. Thus hymns and chants fall flat on His deaf ears, and prayers, adoration, sacrifice and worship all count for nothing and they might be altogether jettisoned, as mere waste of energy. Thus Brahma-Vada cuts at the root of what is known as Religion. This is why Chaitanya said, that Sankara's interpretation of the Vedanta Sutras, is likely to cause confusion. The Padma Purana goes a step further and says that Sankara's

philosophy is Buddhism (i.e. atheism) in disguise. It is therefore easy to understand the opposition to the supposed presence of Brahma-cult in the Gatha.

It should however be noted, that mere mention of Brahma-cult is one thing, and its approbation is another. What harm there is to the Parsi Religion, if Brahma is mentioned in the Gatha, but is not extolled? Ramanuja also is a great opponent of the Ideal Monism of Sankara, and an ardent champion of the Bhakti (devotion) cult, but he does not say, that Impersonal (Nirguna) Brahma does not occur in the Upanishads. He only says that it does not suffice to explain the origin of the universe, or the religious urge in man. What harm there is in thinking that the attitude of the Gatha in this matter, is more or less similar. Let us therefore have no prejudice, that the mere mention of the Brahma, would contaminate the Gatha. I would go a step further and say that the evaluation of Brahma-cult, **if any is implied in the text of the Gatha, would raise the level of its philosophical discussion.**

For let us look the other way and see what its absence would mean. That the conception of the Brahma (the Absolute of European metaphysics) is one of the fundamental conceptions of philosophy cannot be denied. In spite of all his defects, Sankara's is a name that may not be trifled with in the region of philosophy. It may not be said that the modern age of Science has out-grown

the wit of Sankara. For the "Substance" of Spinoza, (of which Mind and Matter are two modes of expression) and the "Pure Being" of Hegel, (which evolves the universe by the three processes of Thesis, Anti-Thesis, and Synthesis) are only variations of the Brahma-idea. The conception of Brahma, as the ultimate source of the Universe, seems inescapable. Whatever may be said about the 'What' (nature) of the Absolute, the "That" (existence) of the Absolute is admitted by almost all the Schools of Philosophy. Of course there is a Philosophy of Materialism, and one of Pluralism, and that of Scepticism. But the upholders of these systems hardly believe in their own assertions, not to speak of carrying conviction to others. **It seems improbable that a profound thinker like Bhagavan Zarathustra was entirely ignorant of this fundamental conception, and that in propounding his philosophy of religion — the most rational of all he left the idea of the Brahma entirely out of consideration.** It would not therefore be very strange, if there is a reference to Brahma in the Gatha.

I would even say that such reference would be very appropriate. **Bhagavan Zarathushtra is the most resolute monotheist in the whole galaxy of the Prophets.** And monotheism, in the ultimate analysis, is based on Monism. **For if there is not one Entity at its root, the Universe ceases to be a Universe and becomes a multi-verse.** In a multiverse

there can be no system (no general law that governs all the units), no sense of comparative value, and therefore no meaning in life.

I am therefore inclined to hold that **Bhagavan Zarathushtra accepted the idea of the Brahma, but did not confine himself to it. He brought out all its implications and contrived a Bhakti cult out of it.**

As the Religion of the Veda may appear to be, at first sight, a polytheistic cult, it might do away with the category of Brahma. But a monotheistic Religion of the Gatha can hardly do without it. **Of course one may not invent Brahma in the Gatha, if it is not there, but at the same time one should not shut his eyes at it, if it is there.**

I think Brahma is definitely mentioned in the Gatha in the line

1	2	3	4	5
Hada	Westa	Bahmeng	Saraosha	Radhangho
				Yas- 46-7
2	3	1	5	
Know Brahma by constantly adoring (recollecting) with reverence.				

"Know Brahma" is stated here in the categorical voice of the Upanishada. Brahma Himself, and not His Will. ('Brahma' becomes 'Bahma' in Zend by dropping the 'r' as 'Prati' becomes 'Paiti').

I am aware that the word Bahma has been variously interpreted as 'praise' 'glory' 'worship' or 'Will'. That does not operate as an estoppel — on the other hand, want of unanimity in the interpretation,

suggests that none of them may have been correct.

Even in Sanskrit, the word Brahma has a number of meanings, as Amara Kosa enumerates :—

Vedas tatwam tapo Brahma
Brahma Viprah Projapatih

Brahma has all these meanings

- (1) Veda (2) Reality (3) Discipline
(4) Brahmin and (5) Prajapati.

In the well-known word "Brahma Chari", Brahma means 'discipline'. But that does not warrant one to claim, that it should **always** mean 'discipline'. The first point to consider, is whether in this passage, Brahma can also be interpreted as the Ultimate Reality. And the next point is to consider which meaning is the most appropriate. A very glaring instance where Brahma does not mean the "Ultimate Reality", is in the Gita (14-3) "Mama Yonir Mahat Brahma" where 'Brahma' means 'Nature' (a meaning missed by Amara Kosa) but it does not counter-act, that in most of the passages of the Gita, Brahma means the Ultimate Reality ("The Absolute" of European Philosophy.)

Thus whatever may be the meaning of Brahma, in other passages of the Gatha, let us hold, that in this passage at least, Brahma means the Ultimate Reality. Such meaning is possible and there is no reason why it should be rejected, only to suit the susceptibilities of the empiricist translators. In the excess of the zeal to maintain the purity of the Bhakti Yoga (which requires two persons, God and His devotee) let us not try to erase all

traces of monistic Brahma, out of the Gatha. Such an attitude is based on a mis-conception, and results in detracting the glory of Bhagavan Zarathushtra. For it is tantamount to saying that the Foremost Prophet of mankind was entirely ignorant of such fundamental philosophical idea as that of the Absolute. Yet let us not be guided by mere sentiment. Let us take an objective view of the matter, and look for the background, and historical development, of the Gathic ideas.

Gatha was ushered in at a time, when the Vedic religion was fairly advanced. **As a matter of fact, the object of Bhagavan Zarathushtra, seems to have been the reformation of Vedic religion.** Thus he starts by saying "Ayao noit eres visyata Daeva chino" (Yas 30-5) "Of them two, the Deva-worshippers do not see aright" Deva-worship was current at the time, and there was intimate intercourse between the Vedic people and the Gathic. That is how Yajurveda borrows the Gathic metres Asuri Gayatri, Ushnik, and Pankti,* and the Atharva Veda borrows the word 'Anghra Manyu' out of the Gatha, and converts it into Ugra Manyu. (Atharva Veda 1-10-1). This is the back ground of the Gatha. Now the idea of the Brahma was fully developed in the Rigveda. It speaks of Him, as one breathing 'without air' (Rig Veda 19-129-2), for even the existence of a second substance as air is inconsistent with the extreme monism of the Brahma. It is unlikely that Bhagavan Zarathushtra

was completely in the dark about this, a very cardinal idea, of the Veda. It is more reasonable to suppose, that the doctrine had reached his ears. A Reformer does not reject the old cult in toto. He retains the good points, and discards the baneful ones. Bhagavan Zarathushtra did not reject the ideas of Rita (Rectitude) or Amritata (Immortality), or the Fire cult, merely because they were current in the Rig Veda, and the likewise did not also reject the idea of Ultimate Monism. This finds expression in his words :—

"Yehya ma aithis chit dwayetha (Yes 32-16 and 48-9) — that **there may before me, the end of all duality.**

This is also how the idea Zravan Akarena crops up in the Avesta. I am well aware of the large volume of opposition that there is against this concept, and that this dogma is by many persons considered to be nothing but crass heterodoxy. I can well understand their motive. **A misunderstood monism, is destructive of all devotion and of all morality. For Brahma knows not the distinction between love and hatred, or between right and wrong, while devotion to God, and pursuit of rectitude is the very essence of Mazda Yasna.** Thus Brahma Vada and Mazda - Yasna seemed to be quite incompatible. But the whole opposition is based on a mis-conception about the relation between Brahma and God. Rightly understood Brahma Vada would seem to be the very

foundation of Mazda Yasna. This cannot be dismissed with impunity. Thus those people who raised a hue and cry against Zravan Akarena, ended, by making Ahriman a rival of Mazda. For there is no denying the fact that there is Evil in the world, and one who does not know how to eliminate Evil in the super-cosmic Entity of Brahma, would ever be inclined to consider the existence of Evil as a blemish in God, and hold it to be due to a rival Force. To eliminate the Evil, (to kill the Vritra — as both the Veda and the Avesta describes it), the help of Brahma is called for. This is very much evident in the celebrated passage of the Avesta (Vendidad 19-9) where Bhagavan Zarathushtra points out the way as to how to neutralise the powers of Angra Manyu. He reminds Angra Manyu, that Spenta Manyu also (with all his hosts), inheres in Zravan, and thus Angra Manyu may not consider himself to be all in all. The verb “Dathad” in the text, has been translated as ‘Created’ and that produced the confusion. Root “dha” here is not a transitive verb; it is intransitive, and means ‘to hold on’ ‘to persist’. Thus “dathad Spenta manyus”, means Spenta Manyu persists, and persists in Zravan. Thus the status of Zravan, as the source of these two prime-ordial opposite Forces, seems irrefutable. In any case, ‘Zravan’ is there in the Avesta, and it seems to be a repetition of the idea of ‘Brahma’ of the Gatha. No doubt Brahma has been kept in the back ground in the Gatha, and intentionally so, for Bhagavan Zarathushtra wanted to em-

phasise the devotional and moral aspects of Religion. That is a fundamental necessity. For without the background of Morality, there can be no genuine search for God, and without the reverence for God, there can be no question of attunement with Him. Disregard of this fundamental principle had brought things to such a pass that “the worst moral culprits came to be regarded as the favourites of Gods”. It is for rectifying such state of things, that Bhagavan Zarathushtra preached his religion (Yas 32-4). That is why he kept the idea of the Brahma in the background, lest it creates a confusion about the great importance of Rectitude. But he did not give the go-bye to this fundamental concept. This is how it rears its head again and again as Zravan Akarana, as is again now seen in Theosophist Parsis. By “keeping in the background”, we mean that Bhagavan Zarathushtra did not prescribe this lesson for the primary classes, but reserved it as an advance course, for the Upper classes. This is the implication of the very significant line

At hoi Vahmeng demane garo nidama

Yas 45-8

‘And we would entertain that Brahma in the House of Songs’ (i.e. the Highest Heaven). Realisation of Brahma (Coalescence of the Individual Soul with the World Soul) is a thing that is to be reserved for attainment in the highest heaven. Our immediate concern is with the Personal God or Mazda, to see Him and touch Him, and talk with Him.

Darasto is cā Mazda hem parastois ca

Yasna 33-6 & 46-8 & 32-2

We live in an age of sophistry and are inclined to think that all talk about seeing God and speaking with Him is unreal. It is merely figurative. But the the experience of earnest devotees (mystics) is different. Even the other day, Swami Vivekananda approached Ram Krishna Paramhansa and asked him whether he had seen God, and he got the reply that Paramhansa deva sees him more vividly than he seen Vivekananda. **We may have more faith in our cleverness, and reject these witnesses as deluded.** But in that case we ought to give up all discussion about religion, and be satisfied with the Positivism of Compté. **To a true devotee, a God who cannot be perceived is as good as non-existent. In any case Bhagavan Zarathushtra believed that Mazda could be seen, and he hungers for it. The prospect of Brahma does not incline him to supersede Mazda.** Whether coalescence with Brahma is desirable, or a necessity, may be taken up for consideration later on. The first thing to do is to get a vision of Mazda. The Bhagavata Purana, the most esteemed manual of the Hindu devotee, says (3-25-19) that the best way of attaining Brahma, is devotion to to God. Bhagavan Zarathushtra also says the same thing viz. **that Brahma-realisation is in the gift of Mazda**

(1) Vehmeng Vakshat Ahura
(Yas 48-1)

May Ahura give us Vahma

(2) Vahmai daidi savanho
(Yas 51-2)

Inspire reverence, for (the attainment of) Brahma.

Just as Bhagavat Purana, reserves the question of Brahma realisation, for a

subsequent or a consequent stage, the Gatha also does the same thing. But this is not to be understood as disowning Brahma.

[The Gita however places Brahma-realisation and God-realisation on a par, but says that Brahma-realisation is more difficult to attain, Gita 12-5]

The word Brahma occurs in the following passages of the Gatha (Yasna), (1) 34-2 (2) 45-6 (3) 45-8 (4) 46-10 (5) 46-17 (6) 48-1 (7) 50-7 (8) 50-10 (9) 51-2 and (10) 53-2.

Out of these 10, only in three passages viz. (1) 34-2 (2) 46-10 and (3) 50-10, Brahma means glorification. In the remaining seven passages Brahma may very well be interpreted as the Absolute. (Transcendent God).

I am therefore inclined to think that the Brahma of the Gatha is the equivalent of the Brahma of the Upanishad i.e. the Absolute of the Western Philosophy. Only this-wise the advent of Zravan Akarana may be accounted for.

Let me now take up the question of Sufism. Sufism is the very spirit of Iran. It is this undying spirit that sustained Iran through all vicissitudes, and it asserts itself with renewed vigour after her very downfall. Every bit of literature in Iran, worth the name, is replete with Sufistic idea. Some people have tried to trace its origin, to the influence of Greek Philosophy, others to that of Indian Philosophy, and some others to Koran. They are all mistaken. **Sufism is a genuine product of Iran — the rare**

fruit of the noble tree of **Gatha**. Far from being a product of Islam, Sufism was considered to be antagonistic to Islam, and its first exponent in post-Islamic Iran, Mansur (al hallaj), a very great son of Iran, was killed on the scaffold. It is the insistent and persistent attempts of the Iranian saints, that gradually reconciled Islam to Sufism. But for the life-long devoted service of **Iranian saints**, like **Bostami**, **Tabrez** and **Ghazzali**, Sufism would not have found a place in annals of Islam. The final reconciliation was made by Jalaluddin **Rumi**, one of the greatest sons of Iran, whose **Masnavi** is considered to be the Bible of Sufism.

Jalaluddin openly admits his debt to Mansur;

Taft nur-i-subeh o ma aj nur-i-tu
Dar sabuhi ba mai-i-Mansur-i-tu

(Masnavi 1-1809)

"The light of dawn has shone forth, and from Thy light, we are engaged in the morning-drink, with the **wine of Thy Mansur**". And **Mansur's great spell**, '**An Al Haque**' '**I am the Reality**' is pure and simple **Brahma-Vada**. And this **Brahma-Vada** is a theme of the **Avesta**. For even those ultra-dualists, who deny any trace of **Brahma** in the **Gatha** cannot deny that **Zravan Akarana** is there in the **Avesta**, and **Zravan Akarana** is only another name for **Brahma**. And if **Mansur's** glimpse of **Brahma** may be traced to the **Avesta**, there is no reason why we should seek it in **Greece** or **India**. **Mansur** persisted in repeating "**An al Haq**" up to his last breath, because this

Ideal-Monism of **Zravan Akarana**, was coursing into his **Iranian blood**.

But a word of caution is here necessary — a very important caution, disregard of which operates to make **Monism** seem unacceptable to **Zoroastrians**. The Foremost Prophet of mankind did not fail to perceive that extreme monism is destructive of all religious sentiments, and therefore he took care to remind us that this **At-one-ment** with **Brahma**, is to be attained, not by contemplation, but by love. There is a world of difference, between the two points of view — one is the **Pure Monism** of **Sankara** and the other is the **Modified Monism** of **Ramanuja**. **Ramanuja's** mission was to revive religious fervour, as against the dull dreary quietism of **Sankara**, and **Ramanuja** championed **At-onement** through love. This is what **Bhagavan Zarathushtra** had taught ages ahead. He puts the question as to what would be the duties of that person who wants to attain **Brahma**, and he then replies that it should be through love.

Yehya Bahma Vohu frashi Mananha
Ahya Khratu fra ma sastu Vahista

Yas 45-6

Tell me all about the duties of him who wants to know **Brahma** through good mind.

[It may be noted that the 'e' in **Bahme** is not the sign of the locative case. It is the 'e' of the first case-ending, as laid down by **Panini** 7-1-39]

The reply is:—

Ta ve vohu mananha Ashai ca Sabais
Civisi

Yas 51-15

"Attain that, through conscience, for Rectitude, and by Love"

It is to be noted that prescription of Love as the method marks the transition from Impersonal to Personal God, from Brahma to Mazda. For love implies response (from the Beloved) and therefore Personality. There can be no love where there is no possibility of response from the beloved (irrespective of whether it is favourable or not, in the beginning). In the matter of love, an impersonal entity, on whom our yearning cannot make the least impression, is as good as dead, and love is bound to wither away sooner or later. Thus by his acceptance of love as the method of worship, Bhagavan Zarathushtra shows his preference for personal God. But this does not mean that he ignores the other aspect in toto. **Both the aspects are necessary, — Personal God to uphold Rectitude, and Impersonal God to explain the origin of Evil.**

But how can these two opposite features, Personality and Impersonality, be reconciled in the same Being? **The solution suggested by Vedanta is mutual Adhyasa or inter-penetration. Brahma interpenetrates Iswara, and Iswara interpenetrates Brahma. This Brahma is Iswara and Iswara is Brahma — they are one-in-two and two-in-one.** A similar instance we find in the ONE. A similar instance we find in the psychological fact of INTROSPECTION, WHERE THE MIND IS BOTH THE SUBJECT AND ALSO THE OBJECT of the same action. **The self which is witnessed, is no other than the Self which witnesses it.** They are the

Self-same, and yet there is a difference in their function. Bhagavan Zarathushtra also offers the same solution, and I shall not be surprised if Vedanta took the cue from the Gatha. For Bhagavan Zarathushtra, Brahma is Mazda, and Mazda is Brahma.

(1) "Jyais perethus Behmanhya Yusmakahya".

Yas, 40-7

"May I attain communion with You who art Brahma"

(2) "Kshnum Mazdao Bahmai"

Yas 53-2

"The ecstasy of Mazda, the Brahma".

Then again, **Bhagavan Zarathushtra proposes Love, not only the method of emancipation, but also as the condition of the emancipated soul.**

Katham Mazda Jaren Carani haca Kxmat

Yas 44-17

When, Mazda, would I whirl and re-whirl along with you?

This is a complete repudiation of the view of Sankara, who does not tolerate the existence of two, in the emancipated state.

The song of Love tuned by Bhagavan Zarathushtra, is echoed in the much-maligned Khetu-avadata of the Avesta. If worship through Madhur-Rasa does not affect the purity of Chaitanya, if the simile of the bridegroom does not soil the purity of the New Testament, there can be nothing obscene in the Khetwa avadat of the Avesta.

(Yasna 12-28)

For all these reasons viz. (1) an intimate knowledge of the Vedic atmos-

phere (2) the development of the idea in the Zravan Akarana of the Avesta and (3) the recurrence of Sufism in Iran, it is reasonable to infer that the word Brahma in the Gatha, means the same thing as Brahma in the Upanishad viz. the Absolute Ultimate Reality, and any other explanation of the word is merely beating about the bush.

It is thus evident that the Gatha is quite conscious of this variety of Duality of Godhead viz. that which is reflected in its Personal and Impersonal aspects. I would now only touch on the other variety of Dualism viz. the Assar-ya Bibhava (Prowess Aspect) and the Madhurya Bibhava (Love Aspect) of the Lord. One is the stern upholder of Justice, and the other is the kind of fountain of forgiveness and Love. Both the parents have infinitive love for the child but the Father has an eye for discipline and has got to be stern, while the Mother brings about a change of heart by her tears. The good of the child is uppermost in the mind of both of them but their methods of correction differ. The contrast is developed in the Hindu Puranas, particularly in the Vaisnava Literature, but the idea is met with in an ascent state in the Veda. No doubt Indra is the Chief God in the Vedas, (Just as Vishnu is the Chief God in the Puranas) but Vishnu is not unknown to the Vedas. There are several hymns addressed to Vishnu. The main characteristic of Indra is that He assails Vritra, i.e. He fights the Evil. The main characteristic of Vishnu is that He is the fountain of honey (Rig 1-154-5) i.e. the spring of love. Thus the two principal

attributes of God-Head viz. His Justice and Love are kept prominent before the eyes. The Gatha also recognises the distinction. Mazda also, like Indra, is the killer of Vritra-Verethrenja (Yas 44-16). But He is also the Source of forgiveness, or merej dika — (Yas 51-4). The Sinner is not excluded from His love (Yas 43-4) Islam too evinces the idea in its conception of Al Kahar and Al Rahim.

Ab - e halam O stas-e Khasan al pisar
Ham je hak bini Ghu bi-gushai nazār

Masnavi 1-853

OH SON, WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR EYES, YOU WILL SEE THAT FROM THE SAME GOD, PROCEED BOTH
(1) THE WATER OF CLEMENCY and
(2) THE FIRE OF ANGER.

It is thus evident that the Gatha is conscious also of this variety of Duality viz. that which is constituted by the highest attributes of Justice and Love.

It is however the all-absorbing Love for God — the Surus — that is pre-eminent by the Religion of Iran. That enabled her to negotiate with Impersonal Brahma, and evolve out of it personal Mazda, and it taught her to look upon Mazda, as the Friend, the Brother and the Father. (Yas 45-11).

It enabled her to win over Islam with the Philosophy of Sufism. Sufism is the Elixir that changes the Caterpillar into the Butterfly.

There is no trace of Sufism in the Koran. This is what led Abu Said the celebrated Doctor of Sufism to state that

Sufism is to be found in the 8/7th Chapter (i.e. the unwritten chapter) of the Koran (Nicholson studies in Islamic Mysticism p. 59) **Sufism is the spirit of the Gatha, and with this alchemy, the Iranians transmuted Islam.**

In this Conquest of Islam, Mansur gave the start But he did this very abruptly by crying "An al Haq" before a crowd, and he had to pay for this indiscretion by his life. He was put to the scaffold. **Jalal** says the same thing, but he does so very adroitly, by imputing the status to Hazrat Muhammad, (so that none could contradict it, without questioning the dignity of Hazrat Muhammad) He says that **"which way Muhammad looked, he saw the face of Allah"**.

Chun Muhammad pak and jin nar O dud
Har Kuja ru Kunad Ojah Alla bud

Masnvi 1-1392

And Jalal is regarded as the Second prophat of Islam.

Mansur did not do any thing else. He saw God in everybody, including himself. He did what Hazrat Muhammad himself did. But this is giving up completely the Semitic theory of creation viz. creation out of nothing, and reverting to the **Gathic idea of creation**, which is that of **Transformation, viz., that God created the world out of his own Being. For the two Manyus (Forces) which form the warp and the web of the Universe, are the Manyus of Mazda-emanation of His Energy.** Yas 19-9). **As a matter of fact there is only one Manyu.** As it issues out of Mazda, it is called **Angra Mainyu or Centufugal Force** —

At infinity, it describes a Circle (named Kula Kundalini by the Hindus) and turns back to Mazda. Then it is called **Spenta Mainyu (Centripetal Force).** **When it comes out of Mazda, it is Angra Mainyu, and when it goes back to Mazda, it is Spenta Mainyu.** In man, (as in every thing created), there is the play of the two Mainyus, and when Spenta Manyu preponderates, he reaches atonement with Mazda. But the **Manyu (whether in its forward, or its backward course) is the Energy of Mazda. Every thing in the universe, is a chip of the old block,** and in seeing the Universe, we see the manifestation of God. The water in the pitcher represents the water of the sea, and we can see His face in the Friend, in the Brother, in the Father (Yas 45-11). God has got to be seen in his manifestations, and unless we find God the Universe, we would find him nowhere. **The Transcendental God — the Brahma— eludes our grasp. The Immanent God—Mazda— may be seen everywhere.** He it is that is playing part of the Father, the Husband, the Worker, the Merchant, the Saint, and the Multitude of Saints (Yas 53-4). There is nothing in the Universe, that is not His manifestation — both Light and Darkness come from Him (Yas 44-5) No doubt there is a vast difference in the degree of his manifestation. His manifestation is higher in the man, than in the beast, higher in the beast than it is in the wood. In other words, it is the presence of a greater proportion of Spenta Manyu in the object, that serves to manifest Mazda in it, more and more, as we ascend higher and higher in the Scale of Existence.

Ahya Manyeus twem ahl ta spenta

Yas 47-3

"Whatever is Spenta (good) in the Spirit, that Thou art".

The End of our life is to reach His highest Manifestation — the Behest.

This becomes possible for us when Spenta Manyu (the Benign Energy) develops into Bahistam Mana (Purest Mind), within ourselves.

At ashaune vashistem mano

Yas 30-4

It is then that we feel the presence of Mazda, and walk in His company.

Kathem Mazda Jarem Carani haca Kshmat

Yas 44-17

In this matter of attaining the Highest Life, it is **Bhagavan Zarathushtra** who gives us the greatest aid. For of all the Prophets he had the clearest idea, as to what God means, and what are His relations with men. There is nothing hazy, nothing mysterious, or nothing

occult in the religion preached by him. Mazda is the upholder of justice and love, and He can be attained through Rectitude (Asha) and Devotion (Sarosh).

The more one is attuned to Him through Rectitude and Love, the more Godly (Twavan) (Yas 31-16) does he become, and the better qualified for the sight of Mazda. This is what makes Jalaluddin Rumi turn towards the cult of Zarathushtra, as the last resort, even at the risk of being considered a Hindu.

Parsi goem hein tazi bi - hil

Hindu - e an Turk bash, ai ab O gil

Mašnavi 3-2839

Let us speak Persian. Yes, abandon Arabic. Oh man of water and clay, be a Hindu (believer in the Absolute) amongst the Turks

Hon Mazda

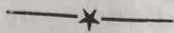
Hon Mazda

Hon Mazda

("Hon" is the Iranian replica of "OM")

Hon (Ahunad = Hun = Aum = Om

(H = A; N = M).



DINI SAAL

Zoroastrian Religious Year

by

Behram D. Pithavala

The Sun returned to the first degree of Aries, in the month of Fravardin, Shah Jamshed performed Jashan ceremony on that day and called it Navroze. Whosoever performs Jashan on this day and joyfully takes part in the celebration thereof, will pass his life in happiness till the next day of Navroze. Wise men have confirmed this experience.

—Omar Khayyam (1025–1123 A.D.) in his Navrozenameh.

Clarion call of Teer Yazad — Teer Yasht, para 36.

“Kadha Airyao dainghavo hooyairyao bawaonti ?”

When will the Aryan countries become followers of a true calendar (“Hooyairyao”) ?

Dini-Fasli Sal is the only year which a true Zoroastrian should follow. This calendar coincides with nature and the Law of Asha Vahista, symbolised by KHURSHED YAZAD (Sun). According to the teachings of Zoroastrianism, all prayers and ceremonies should be in consonance with not only the months and days of the year, but even with the Gahs (five daily periods of Namaz.) According to Shayast-La-Shayast ceremonies not performed on the proper day and time do not result in giving proper spiritual effect.

All truth-seeking Zoroastrians know that the year generally followed by us

has lagged behind nearly six months, with the result that the prayers and ceremonies to be performed in the Summer are now being performed in Winter and vice versa. True Zoroastrian New Year which should begin with Spring now falls in monsoon.

Sohrab.

Both the current Parsi Calendars are incorrect, and the true and correct calendar can only be the one, that reckons the year as beginning from the day of the Vernal Equinox.

In **Dadestan-i-Dinik** it is stated that the Holy Fravashis of the departed souls return to this mortal world “during the ten Farvardegan days, on their anniversaries, on Roz Farvardin Mah Adar, and whenever they are invoked during the year”. It is, no doubt true that the Fravashis can be invoked at any time. But a strong argument can be advanced that if our ancient religious texts indi-

cate a particular period of the year as the proper time for the visit of the Fravashis, who come to bestow their choicest blessings on their devotees, it is our duty to ascertain this true and correct period and to observe it at the true and correct time.

Every right thinking person of our community—man, woman, young and old — should study for himself or herself this important problem and make sincere, earnest and persevering efforts toward a true solution of this vexed question? **We see the right, we know the right but do the wrong, so says Mr. Homi D. Banaji.**

Our Calendar was based on the Sun's passage through zodiacal signs.

It was a custom of the Iranians to keep the days of Gatha near the Vernal Equinox.—**Abul Hasan Kushyar** (about 1058 A.D.).

Gathas were always kept in the season of Spring. Gahambars were festivals connected with seasons.—**Majority opinion of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Panchang Committee.**

According to my own views..... it is not against the principles of our religion to add a day (as Kabiseh) — **Sheth Mancherji Khareghat**, President Bombay Parsi Punchayet Panchang Committee.

"Ez Ahunavar Minuy Saal fraz but", i.e., the Spiritual year arose from the

Word of God (Ahunavar) (at the time of Creation.—**Zand-Akasiht**)*.

Since some decades past a controversy has been raging in our community on the question of our true New Year day. It is not a matter of mere annual celebrations and festivities. The present wrong calendars have upset all our important religious feasts and **it is our bounden duty to set things right once for all** in the light of the extant books our religious customs and usages and **dictates of common sense.**

We humbly give below some cogent reasons to prove that, as in Iran in ancient times, our religious year must be made to start from the day of the entry of the Sun into Aries, which happens on the 21st of March every year. We do not want to impose upon you. We only want you to consider this matter in a spirit of dispassionate inquiry, **leaving aside all prejudices and preconceptions.**

The quotation given at the top of this discussion is pregnant with meaning. It shows that in Iran a religious year (Minuy Saal), as distinct from a civil year was in vogue; and further, that it had its inception at the very dawn of creation itself. Its importance can be gauged from the fact that a whole chapter (No. XXV) is devoted to this subject in Bunddahishn under the heading "Religious Year" (Saal-i-Dini). **The expression "Dini Saal" is not coined by us.**

Evolution of Calendar in Iran
The phenomenon of day and night

was the only means of measuring time in bygone ages. Thereafter the people conceived the idea of measuring time by reference to the cyclic waxing and waning of the Moon; the period of one such cycle they called "month" from the Moon (**"Mah"** or **"Mahya"**).

Later on, they observed that the Sun does not rise in due East throughout the year: they found that for about six months the Sun appears to move Northwards, then it seems to stand still (Solstice) and then it starts moving Southwards for another six months till it reaches the other Solstice. This period of six months they termed **"Ayana"**, and the period of two such Ayanas they termed **"Yairya"**, for which the English cognate word is "year", German 'jahr' (pron. Yaar).

The Hindu Aryans commenced the year on the day the Sun started moving Northwards (i.e. from about 22nd December), since they believed that the gods resided in that direction. On the other hand, the Iranians believed that the abode of God (Dadar-i-Gehan) was in the South, and hence they started their year from the day the Sun moved Southwards (on or about 22nd June); their two main feasts then being the New Year day and the **Mid-year** day which coincides with the Sun's movement Northwards and was called by them **"Maidhyairya"**.

Later on, the attention of the Iranians was drawn towards another phenomenon of nature which occurred perennially: they saw a symbolical relationship

to their own lives in the awakening of nature in the Spring. They argued that as a plant life apparently dies and passes into the darkness of Winter to be reborn in the Spring, so also man's spirit and soul may be reborn again after death. They, therefore, began their year from the day the Spring started, which they observed was also the day of solar entry into Tropical Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. They symbolically enacted a perpetual cycle of life, death and newer life again by observing this new type of year. This year they styled **"Saredha"**, because the two original six-month periods were now absorbed in this new scheme (Sa+Ardha). This is not a mere conjecture. Dinkard clearly affirms that the Religious Year is based on the signs and constellations (2) and, further, the first two constellations, viz., Aswini (**"Aspina"**) and Bharani (**"Yevina"** — Yoni) are specifically remembered in Haptan Yasht (3), the reason being that the Sun transits these Nakshatras during most of the first month of the religious year.

Dini-Saal basis of the Gregorian Calendar

Some allege that we are attempting to foist the Christian calendar on our community, but the very basis of the said calendar is Iranian. The first day of the Gregorian calendar falls on the second day of the Maidhyairya Gahambar (31st December/January 4), and its midpoint during the feast of Maidyoshem (June 29/July 3). In short, the Christian year is encompassed by two important old Aryan feasts.

Scheme of the Zoroastrian Religious Year

The fact that the Zoroastrian Religious Year was **Solar Tropical** is proved by following facts

(i) it kept pace with the four seasons of ancient Iran, starting with Spring on the 1st of Fravardin.

(ii) its length is given as "365 days, five hours and a fraction".

The length of a tropical year is 365 days, five hours, 48 minutes, 45 seconds and about 42 thirds (=365.2421955 days) which is the same as that given in Bundahishn.

After the Deluge (9,564 B.C.) referred to in the Vendidad, (Chapter II), the Iranians left their original homeland in the Arctic Region and came down Southwards and settled near about 50 degrees North Latitude. This appears from the length of the longest and shortest days in ancient Iran given in Bundahishn.

The longest Summer day which fell on Roz Khurshid, Mah Teer, was 16 hours long and was double the shortest Winter day.

The Shortest Winter day occurred on Roz Behram, Mah Dae.

At about 50 deg. North Latitude the longest day, June 29, is 16 hours 20 mts. long and that the shortest day is January 4 and its length is 8 hours 14 mts., i.e., almost half.

This does not happen at any other place considerably North or South of

49 or 50 North Lat. This conclusively proves that the Iranians once lived in the Northern parts of Europe or Asia, perhaps in the North of the Caspian Sea.

The relationship of these crucial days with two Ghambars and Navroze

As we have just seen, in ancient Iran the longest day was the first day of Maidhyoshem Gahambar (Mid-Summer Seasonal Feast). We know that **this feast occurred exactly 100 days after the New Year day**. According to the Table of Sunrise and Sunset given by Raphael in his Yearly Ephemerides it is found that at 50 N. the longest day falls on June 29. In other words, the ancient Iranians observed this feast on a day corresponding to June 29. Logically, therefore, it follows that their **New Year day must have been exactly 100 days before that date, viz. on March 21**. Thus :

Fravardin (balance)	29	June	29
Ardibehesht	30	May	31
Khurdad	30	April	30
Teer	11	March (balance)	10
	100		100

Similarly, in ancient Iran the shortest day fell on the fifth and last day of Maidhyairya Gahambar. 76 days after this was the New Year day. Referring to Sunrise and Sunset, we find that at the said place the shortest day of the year falls on January 4. Therefore, if we take January 4 as the date corresponding to Roz Behram, Mah Dae,

Navroze must fall 76 days after January 4, i.e., on March 21. Thus :

Dae (balance)	10	January (balance)	27
Bahman	30		
Spendarmad	30	February	28
Gathas	5	March	22
Fravardin			
	76		76

Farvardegan days (Muktd)—When ?

Fravardin Yasht declares in unequivocal terms that the holy Fravashis of the departed souls remain with us, yearn for our invocation and offerings to them and seek an opportunity to bless us in return, during the period of Hamaspathamaeda or the sixth and last Gahambar. According to **Pajak Nask**, these ten days come at the end of Winter, inclusive of the five days of Gatha. Dinkard testifies that Winter has its start in Iran on the day of solar entry into Capricorn (about 24th December—Roz Adar, Mah Dae), and ends on the day of solar egress from Pisces (March 20th). From a passage in **Nikadum Nask** it becomes clear that the Gatha days always followed after the month of Spendarmad. It was the considered opinion of a majority of the members of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet Panchang Committee that it was a custom amongst Iranians to keep the Gatha days (and hence the ten days of Farvardegan also) near the season of Spring as quoted above.

The sixth Gahambar, Feast of Vernal Equinox

Nobody has yet satisfactorily ascertained the meaning of this Gahambar,

Hamaspathamaeda. My humble suggestion is that it is made up of three distinct words: "**Hamas**" (Sk. Samas) meaning joining, juncture; "**Patha**" meaning paths; and "**Maeda**" meaning in the midst of, i.e., during; and the meaning of the whole expression is thus "**During the meeting of the two Paths.**"

We know that on the day of Vernal Equinox, the Sun arrives at the meeting place of the Ecliptic and the Celestial Equator, which are the two paths referred to above. Thus the last Gahambar must occur near the Vernal Equinox, which now happens on or about March 21.

Equal length of day and night during last Gahambar

Bundahishn declares in categorical terms that during Hamaspathamaeda Gahambar "which occurs during the additional days of Gathas at the end of Spendarmad, the day and night again become equal" (7). As we have seen above, this Gahambar must occur near the Vernal Equinox. As per religious year, therefore, this feast lasts from March 16 to 20. At its midpoint, on March 18, the day and night are almost equal throughout the world. It is noteworthy that at the **Latitude of modern Iran (40 North) the days is exactly 12 hours long on this date.** This conclusively proves that the last Gahambar (and hence the New Year day) must fall in about the middle of March when the Sun is at the Vernal Equinox and the day and night are equal, as required by Bundahishn.

In *Zend Pehlayi Dictionary* there is a passage in *Avesta* which says that the first day of the year must be 12 hours long.

The Zoroastrian Religious Year in the Frame work of Six Gahambars

The unfailing connection of the seasons of the year with the six feasts is indisputable. Whether we are living in India or China or in any other part of the world, it is incumbent upon us to observe these Gahambars as originally schematised by our forefathers in Iran; first, because they have the sanction of our religious books, and, secondly, because it is our **bounden duty to preserve these ancient landmarks without any change**. In this connection, it would not be out of place to point out that **though the learned writer of Bundahishn refers to the great difference between the climates of Iran and India, he has not stated that the period of Rapithwin should not be observed in India.**

Even assuming for the sake of argument that the Gahambars are not feasts of seasons, or that since seasons in India

are different the Gahambars must not be observed according to the old Iranian calendar, we can still observe them as Feasts of Creation in the framework of the religious year, as Thanksgiving days for Creation.

Religious duties

Dinkard says, only the "religious year" should be used for "religious duties".

They are, as per **Husparam Nask**, the following: Gahambars, Rapithwin, Farvardegan days, ceremonies for three days after death and the invocation of the Sun and Moon.

Bundahishn says that this year is used for things connected with the dead bodies and other matters.

Shayast-la-Shayast warns us that those who do not perform these religious duties are not able to cross the Chinvat Bridge. This proves why the religious year only should be followed for the performance of these "religious duties".



The Heritage that is Parsi

by

Sapur Faredun Desai, B. Sc.

Typical Parsi Characteristics :

Zoroastrian teaching enjoins a life of struggle, idleness being very strongly deprecated. As such it extols cheerfulness under all circumstances. The Iranians from early times down to the Sassanians were a cheerful race. The same trait is to be found even today among the Parsis of India 1300 years after Iran went into antiquity. The ceaseless struggle enjoined by the dual ethical concept of good and evil, of light and darkness, of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, is enough to inculcate a spirit of dauntless courage, diligence, faithfulness, justness, tolerance, straightforwardness, generosity, etc. Most of these fine traits are to be found in the Parsis of today. Together with these good traits they have also inherited from their great ancestors some of their **bad traits, traits that cost** them a kingdom.

The valorous Iranian sword carried death and subjection into the hearts of many a kingdom. The plundered riches and the ease with which other wares of daily use and luxury could be obtained from vassal subjects made the fighter clan dependent for its existence on dependent countries. This legacy of luxury and wanton prodigalism, starting with the Median kings and running through the Sassanideae, has been pre-

served in the modern Parsi. Achaemenideae, was not a lesser civilisation and it was in contact with no less than six great civilisations, Egypt and Greece included. Herodotus however says they aped the customs of contact civilisations. Although this **give-and-take customs** is always present in all times and climes, Parsis of India have not been slow in exhibiting this tendency. Some of their customs, mostly social, are an eloquent testimony. Achaemenians were noted for their gaiety, amiability, hospitality, boisterousness and, above all, industry. Their energy was boundless. They pulsated with vigorous life, but they were subject to moods. Restless like a pendulum, they swung from side to side and within their oscillating amplitudes were subject to sudden bursts of hilarity and calmer aftermaths. They would ride rough on the crest of a tidal wave of passion in a broad, bright, gay spirit and then fall into the trough of despondency the next minute. Today this trait even after more than 2000 years characterises the modern Parsi. From mere apeline imitation to true and valuable contribution to the storehouse of knowledge, art and industry, the ancient Iranian and the modern Parsi have undoubtedly subscribed. Between mere apism and genius there lies a great gulf, bridged by a number of those we call average. Most

Parsis fill that gap admirably well. The period of renaissance which started with the House of Sassan was shortlived. During an eventful career of some four centuries and more the Sassanians passed through a gamut of good and bad times. With legitimate pride they traced their ancestry to the great Achaemenian dynasty just as the modern Parsi traces himself to the Sassanian dynasty. But this was no mere flight of fancy. It was a physical continuity in different social surroundings almost bordering on modernity. It had brought with itself the good and bad traits too of the Achaemenians. Christianity had come to stay and was fostered by the impartial and helpful attitude of the kings. Life of ease and luxury was an order of the day, and fine pieces of architecture came into being. However, after Khushru Parviz (Chosroes II), 'manhood decayed' and men became 'effeminate' (Dhalla, 25). Sporting yet flippant, adaptive and assimilative yet imitative, composed and self reliant yet impulsive Sassanians handed down this legacy to the Parsi of today. Dhalla in his criticism is unsparing of the traits which modern Parsis display. While winding up his lucid exposition he writes: "Modern Parsis are enterprising and practical, virile and industrious, generous and benevolent. They are impulsive, not given to reflection, emotional and not intellectual. They are neither philosophical, nor rich in imagination. Talented as they are, they are not endowed with genius." Many writers have suggested that internal dissensions were the *causa causans* that rent asunder the Persian

Empire and Dhalla deplors a similar tendency amongst the present day Parsis.

Iranian concept of Society and the Living Present :

Iranian society has passed through a myriad phases, the **dominant keynote being always the family**. Ahura Mazda praises a man with many children and deprecates celibacy. Continuity of heritage played an important role in the life of Avestan man. Marriage got stabilised. From polygamy and polyandry monogamy and monoandry evolved. The patriarchal form of inheritance dates back to the Kianian times. **Nmano-paiti**, master of the house, is the patriarch. Definite laws were woven round marriage, family, children, adultery, prostitution, abortion, moral turpitude, heinous crimes, crimes against person, property and animals, against sanitation and health, etc., etc. Regulative measures were adopted and codes came into being. **Vandidad**, the code for sanitation and health, came to be written some 3000 years ago. A later compendium **shayast la shayast** is a sort of **addendum sans corrigendum**. Infringement of law was punishable by fines graded according to the degree of the crime. The Zoroastrian conformed to the law or stood punishment meted out to him by **Magi**, the priestly law-giving class, the intelligentsia of the Iranian society, who held the way to the worldly bliss and to the gates of Heaven.

The Avestan society was by no means a mere aggregation. Each class fulfilled a purpose. Just as in the

Hindu culture, so in the Iranian, we have from the earliest times a class system. **In the older Avesta there were three classes. The fourth was added later.** Thus sprang the priest, the warrior, the husbandman and the artisan class so well-known in oriental concept. But none was a despised class in the Iranian society. They all worked for the common end, the common weal. Today this classification no more exists, except that the community is divided into priestly and non-priestly classes. Although the cultural history of the community has been filled in from meagre material, the civilisation that bore the culture has left its indelible marks on the sands of time. When Cyrus wrote his famous text on the solid rock he hardly knew he was inserting a link, an Adam's Bridge, between the anterior and posterior lobes of an organism. These artifacts, these implements, these means of preserving a great victory have done what nothing so far could have achieved by way of a social continuity. The monolith of Cyrus at Pasargadae reminds us of a similar monolith of Asoka. While the latter bears edicts, the former is a simple monument of a victory proclaiming in most humble yet eloquent terms the name of a great victor: **'Adam Kurush Khshayathiya Hakhamanishya'** — **'I am Cyrus, the King, the Achaemenian'** (Jackson, 46). These torch-bearers of an ancient culture, strewn as they are over the face of Iran, portray the life and achievements of a nation that has been through so many vicissitudes. A culture that came into definite contact with Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman

civilisations, has been subject to many an ebb and tide of time. It has reoriented, reabsorbed, revolved and resolved itself into a myriad phases before being handed down to us in the form we have. **While the culture has been subject to this ebb and flow the civilisation has marched on.** At every stage the successor has stood on the shoulders of its predecessor. In every age the people have taken their cue from the people of the past. Emerging from the age of papyrus and rock we have triumphantly moved on to the age of paper and parchment; so from the age of reed and chisel to the age of pen and shovel. While we write history in multiple places with multiple facility, **we have begun to unearth the past and rewrite it in our own way. But gone is the civilisation that bore the ancient culture, now lying static in the ruins before us. The civilisation that one now confronts** is the one that is the result of a socio-kinetic movement in an unchartered manner on an unchartered sea. The typewriter and the printing press, the loudspeaker and the radio, the flying bomb and the pilotless plane are but the symbols of a civilisation that is energetic, ebullient, fanatic, barbarian. **They merely carry the culture on their back, a culture that in itself advances but retards progress,** a culture that brings the world nearer to man's hearth and home in one minute, and sends him to his brother's throat in the next. Man has been evaluating his contemporary culture and sticking to what is best in the milieu, throwing away the rotting elements and incrustations. We have not been able to reproduce the Epic Shahnameh or

Mahabharata, nor have we been able to reproduce Kalidasa, or Shakespeare or Homer. Instead we seem to be going back to barbarism. The valour that made ancient peoples great no more lives through us. The time has come when we should revise our political ideologies and re-evaluate culture as we understand it.

While Iranian culture held sway over a part of the world, India was developing a sister culture of her own. Without going back upon the times we can draw upon the salient features of these great cultures and shape our thought and action. **The Avesta and the Rig-Veda, the Kuran and the Bible have much to each.** The great masters have left for us a storehouse of knowledge which we may replenish in the light of modern civilisation which bridges the past and the present. We need not go back to totemism, to fetishism, to primordial life. However, the present civilisation occupies but a fraction of time compared to the gigantic past that has rolled by. The largest part of man's existence has been a dark chapter. It is only but a fraction of time and a small fraction too that we have seen civilisation. More than half of our time has been taken up by a pastoral and hunting society. It is in the other half that we have advanced. The press and the radio, the engine and the aeroplane are but the inventions of yesterday. While our dim past is little known we have advanced quickly in the shortest space of time. Like an iceberg the major part of our existence has remained below the surface; our known

past is what we see above. **Human solution must then lie in probing leagues below the surface.**

Marxism and Leninism may be today a potent factor in political ideology. **Mazdakism, its Iranian counterpart, was a shortlived cult. It was an all-embracing communism that Mazdak advocated, extending to a communism of wives.** This was repugnant to Zoroastrian mind which never tolerated promiscuity. A culture which advocated a family life round hearth and home, a culture which admired proud deeds in a long line of patriarchal inheritance, could not for a moment tolerate such a teaching. It nipped the movement in the bud, little knowing that its variation will be developed some day centuries later independently by a different set of people in a different country. **Had Mazdakism been properly regulated and developed in a more suitable manner, it would have given a different shape to the political thought of the world in the first millennium after Christ.** With the Greek and Roman contact in Sassanian times the ideology would have travelled earlier into Europe hastening the beginning of nation-states that actually came about the 16th or the 17th century. **Anyhow it was the Sassanian culture that made a Mazdak possible and it is the Iranian culture which the Parsis have inherited. But the civilisation they find themselves in is different.** The times have moved fast and we are past the stage of living on merely past glories. **It is about time the Parsi took to reorientation and**

reestablishment of new values of life. It is about time he launched on a career, not of hectoring and pettifogging but of sobriety, ingenuity and levelheadedness. His forefathers even lived their life, not mere existence, in spite of a differing civilisation around, as witness the Mede, the pseudo-Persian and the Parthian. **An elastic adjustment to changing times is a virtue not a vice. Within the bounds of one's own cultural inheritance there is enough room for adjustment.** The Parsi forefathers managed to make history by emerging once again from the thralldom of a differing civilisation. **It may be next to impossible for history to repeat itself now,** but fortified with a cultural bias, the modern Parsi can weave a new garment to suit the changing times. He has before him the model of Iranian society that has travelled up

steep hills of hard labour, past plains of prosperity and down dales of despondency. That is his own ancestral history. He brings with him a rich lore and a hereditary endowment both precious for posterity. Dictates of destiny have wielded fortunes of man and nation at all times but to a great extent man can fashion out his own destiny from the elements at his command. **He can be his own arbiter. All that he requires is the knowledge of elements that form his environment and the art of wielding the implements that form his social armoury. Modern man has with the advance of science a myriad such implements. They must be used wisely.**

— Extract from

"A Community at the Cross Road"

by S. F. D.



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The Dawn of Khshnoom Zoroastrian Occult Knowledge

by

P. N. Tavaria

By P. N. Tavaria.

Ustad-Saheb Behramshah Naoroji Shroff drawn to Peshawar by the power of holy Nirang Formulae. Miracles shown by the holy Zoroastrian Sage encamped there.

With the introduction of the Philological study in Bombay in the last century, the knowledge of Avesta-Pahlavi literatures which was in olden days mostly confined to the devout Dasturs — and hence unsullied — was acquired by a good number of Parsis in Bombay, and the translations of the entire Avesta Scriptures were placed before the community by the indefatigable labours of the late learned Ervad Kavasji Kanga. But the dark side of the picture was due to the essentially limited scope of philology. Consequently many adverse criticisms arising out of ignorance and misconceptions were levelled against Avestan Scriptures and Sacred religious rites and ceremonies. The result of all this strange paradox was that instead of profiting by the philological study, the community suffered irreparable harm in the shape of disintegration of faith and disregard of religious observances.

When such was the sorry state of affairs, a new light of the Esoteric Commentary Knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion began to shed its lustre in India for the first time in the beginning of the present century.

STRANGE BEGINNING

Somewhere in 1875-76 a youth of about 17 or 18 in a Parsi home in Surat happens to have serious differences with his home people. His maternal place becomes abhorrent to him, so, after making some secret arrangements about his clothes etc., he leaves his

home and city by rail and detrains at Ajmer, which was a terminus station in those days. There is great commotion in the house at Surat, and telegrams fly to many relatives. The youth who thus quit his home in disgust was no other than our reversed Ustad-Saheb the late Seth Behramshah Naoroji Shroff.

BEHRAMSHAH PROCEEDS TOWARDS PESHAWAR ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER.

After detraining at Ajmer Behramshah goes out for a stroll in the city. There he happens to meet one of his maternal uncles residing there. Like other relatives this uncle also had received a telegram. So the latter knows that Behramshah being displeased has left his home. He very much entreats Behramshah to return to his mother's place. But his entreaties are of no avail. So the uncle suggests that he be informed from time to time of the places Behramshah may go to, so that he may remit him Rs. 25/- per month for his travelling expenses. Behramshah approves of this suggestion and agrees to it. So the uncle allows him to proceed, and telegraphs to Surat about his meeting Behramshah. The latter then continues his journey onwards the North on camel or on horseback, and reaches Peshawar.

There one day after attending to a nature's call, he is standing beneath a tree performing his "Kushti" prayer, when a stranger appearing to be a Pathan approaches him, and pointing to a camp having tents at a little distance tells him "Our 'Rad Saheb' desires to meet you". Behramshah has by now come to learn the meaning of 'Rad', as the 'chief' during his tour of Northern India.

THE 'RAD SAHEB' READS BEHRAMSHAH'S THOUGHTS OF APPREHENSION

The approach of this stranger creates fears in Behramshah's mind, because he has heard that among such a tribe there is a practice that if a ring or an earring is to be robbed it must be done after cutting off the finger or the ear, when alone. According to them, it would be 'Halal', i.e. legitimate! Behramshah had on his person some gold ornaments including a gold watch and chain belonging to his father. Such fears assail his mind when there approaches from that camp another person, who is aged, and who says to Behramshah, "Our Rad-Saheb bids me to inform you to entertain no fears about your life and property and requests you to come". With some hesitation still lingering in his mind Behramshah goes with the two men. He is taken into a big tent. There he sees something like a 'Darbar' i.e. a royal court, in the centre of which is seated on a high and well adorned dais the chief who had an imposing personality. Besides the chief there are some in lower seats and others standing with great respect and reverence.

Behramshah is given a warm welcome by the 'Rad-Saheb' and offered a seat and a plate of dry fruits. Behramshah still has apprehensions and suspicions about the fruits offered, and hence partakes of only a few of them. Then the Rad-Saheb inquires of him about the Kushti or the holy thread-girdle, saying "Standing under that tree what were you tying round your waist?". Behramshah gives a fitting reply to the query. The talk between them is in Hindustani.

After this short talk, Behramshah, asks for leave to go and a man is sent to escort him to his hotel, with a bag of dry fruits as a present. At parting, Behramshah is pressed very ardently by the Rad-Saheb to come again the next day, to which Behramshah agrees.

BEHRAMSHAH HAS A DREAM

The next day after taking his mid-day meal in the hotel Behramshah is resting on his

bed. He begins to wonder why these Pathan-looking strangers should seek his company so eagerly? While he is lost in such thoughts sleep overtakes him. He sees a vision in which he finds himself in an orchard full of flowers and fruits, but there is to be seen no gardener or a custodian. "If I pluck some of these fruits, who will notice it?", asks he to himself. As soon as this thought passes through his mind a man wearing a white beard is seen approaching him; then a brook comes to sight and then a parapet by its side. The gardener sits on that parapet, then carries one of his legs on the side of the brook behind, and then the other, and suddenly drops into the brook with a loud noise. With that sound, Behramshah wakes up only to find that it was all a dream. So he diverts his mind from all this and tries to forget it altogether. By now his former unwillingness to go to the Rad-saheb's camp melts away, and he himself gets ready to proceed there. At this time, however, comes the attendant from the Rad-saheb and they both set out for the camp.

RAD-SAHEB RETELLS THE DREAM OF BEHRAMSHAH

After giving a kind reception to Behramshah and seeing him in his seat, the Rad-Saheb smilingly speaks to him—"Say Sir, how you lagged in your honesty and drowned that poor gardener!" At that time Behramshah has forgotten about the dream he had in the afternoon at the hotel and is not able to follow what the Rad Saheb intended to convey. All the other members of the congregation assembled there laugh heartily at his perplexity. This annoys Behramshah; frowningly he asks the Rad-Saheb, "Have you called me here to jest and mock at me?" The Rad-Saheb appeases him. But simultaneously, Behramshah now becomes conscious that the remarks of the Rad-Saheb referred to the dream he had in the hotel. "That was what I saw in the dream. How did you come to know about it?" The Rad-Saheb replies, "Never mind how I have known it,

but is the tale true or not?", and Behramshah confirms it.

EVERYBODY SHOWS BEHRAMSHAH HIS SUDREH AND KUSHTI

The miraculous power shown by the Rad-saheb deeply impresses Behramshah. Thereafter some questions are asked concerning Behramshah's religion. "Who is the Dastoor (high — priest) of your religion?" And so on, which questions Behramshah answers from what little knowledge he possessed. During this meeting the *Rad-saheb reveals that he and all the others in the camp are also Zoroastrian*. All of them lift up their robes and show their Sudreh and Kushti. Behramshah seeing all this now begins to trust there fully and all suspicions about them melt away. After this Behramshah daily visits the camp, till one day, the Rad-saheb informs him about their decamping. Behramshah is induced to go with them to Iran and he accepts the invitation. Now Behramshah goes to Seth Jassawalla's famous banking firm at Peshawar, with which firm he knew his father had some business connections. He tells them that he wishes to give them power to collect the sum of Rs. 25/- monthly which he will receive by post from his uncle at Ajmer. When Behramshah informs Seth Jassawalla about the Rad-Saheb and his own intention of going with the latter to Iran, Seth Jassawalla seriously warns him that such Pathans of the Frontier are very unreliable and deceitful. But Behramshah tells him that he had given a promise to go, and shows his resolute intention to carry it out. Jassawalla then plans a stratagem. He telegraphs to Surat calling for a wire to the effect that Behramshah's mother is very seriously ill, and is yearning to meet her son. Jassawalla had in his mind that Behramshah should take such a telegram to the Rad-Saheb and thus be free from the promise he had given.*

RAD-SAHEB REVEALS FABRICATION OF TELEGRAM

When the telegram is received, Behramshah is informed of the same and is asked to

take it with him to the Rad-Saheb and acquaint him with its contents. But the Rad-saheb sees through the plan. He says, "I will just let you know". So saying, he shuts his eyes and directs his spiritual sight to the house where Behramshah used to dwell at Surat and then informs Behramshah, "Today happens to be your mother's birthday and she is just having a very good meal of rice and pulse and curd". Behramshah recollects that day to be his mother's birthday according to the Parsi calendar, and so accepts the veracity of the Rad-saheb's statement. On this Behramshah returns to Jassawalla and tells him about what the Rad-saheb had revealed. Seth Jassawalla is wonder-struck, and gives up his own previous objection against Behramshah going to Iran with the Rad-saheb, and in fact agrees to it. At last the tents are unpitched and the small caravan commences its return journey to Mount Demavand with Behramshah as one of them.

The caravan are all on horse-back and wind through a narrow track amidst the tall grass. But when Behramshah looks back the track vanishes. All that is visible is the tall, high grass everywhere. In fact the sight of the tall grass was a mere illusion created for diverting away from the notice of others their movements. In this way they are journeying through Chitral (north-west of Kashmir), and at last after several days they all halt near a barren mountain. Here the horseman at the front dismounts and recites something prayerfully. Immediately after this a square black stone comes to sight. This stone is pulled out and thereafter many more stones are also removed; and then comes to their view what is like a tunnel. After entering the tunnel, they keep climbing up the mountain for a great length of time in complete darkness. At last the great vault of the sky comes to view and they reach a lovely place, fresh and delightful. Behramshah finds human habitations in this place.

The above story is recounted mostly from what was directly heard in Gujarati from the Master himself. The mountain referred

to above is called Mount Daemavand or Demavand Koh. It is referred to in the 8th paragraph of the Pazand prayer, "Afreen-i-haft Ameshaspandan", as:

"HAMA-ZOAR DAEMAVAND KOH KE
DRAVAND BIVARASP ANDAR OYE
BASTA ESTED."

(Literal translation) — Be in accord with Daemavand Koh (mt.) in which is enchained the demon bivarasp, the demon (with power) of ten thousand horses."

With regard to 'bivarasp' it may be explained that the word 'asp' meaning horse represents power. Here it stands for the evil powers of the Dravand, demon. 10 in ten thousand denotes perfection either in good or evil; thousand horses indicate the thousand powers, i.e. innumerable evil powers of the demon. Hence the sentence means 'Be in accord with the holy saints-in-seclusion in Mt. Daemavand who by their incantations keep under control the devil perfect in countless evil powers'.

Mount Demavand is on the north-east of Tehran, the capital of Iran. By the side of a pleasant valley in the Mt. Demavand area known as Alburz (Avesta-Har-Berez) our Master said that there live in seclusion the holy Zoroastrian sect of Saheb-Dilan numbering about 2,000. The head of this sect is called the "Sraoshavarez". Since this Saheb-Dilan sect and their chief, the holy Sraoshavarez Saheb, are most intimately connected with, and have played the highest role in the marvellous training and spiritual enlightenment of our Master, it is but meet to give some idea about them here below before proceeding with the story of our Master.

THE HOLY "SAHEB-DILAN"

(Master-Hearts).

While speaking about the above mentioned "Saheb-Dilan" sect (Master-Hearts) our Master informed that forty-nine years prior to the

fall of the Zoroastrian empire, some holy Master-Souls of the time went into seclusion taking with them the Holy Scriptures and whatever was required for the strict observance of the Zoroastrian law of Asha, purity. They and their followers or descendants still lead lives entirely in tune with Nature and with the sublime teachings of the Zoroastrian religion.

As regards the superiority of the Saheb-Dilan over the followers of the other two Paths called the paths of revelation there is found a reference to them in the book (in Gujarati) entitled "*Jam-i-Kaikhushru or Mukashafat-i-Kaiwani*", meaning the Revelation of Kaiwani, originally containing about 325 couplets in Persian describing the heavenly experiences of the Dastur Saint Azar Kaiwan who had become very famous in India by his great spiritual miracles during the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar the Great. These couplets were translated from Persian in Gujarati in the year Y.Z. 1217, that is, one-hundred and ten years ago by Syed Mir Ashraf Ali Munshi. In his preface, the learned Moslem translator mentions (in 1946 reprint, p. 5) *three types of Paths of Revelation called Mukashafat or Mushahadat*, and states that the saints of the Saheb-Dil sect acquire more light of Revelation than those who follow the other two Paths. The passage regarding these three types of Paths runs as under:

"The followers of the first Path are called *doctors of "Illahiat" or "Mutalahih"*, who by the purity of their body and the power of austerity follow the Path of Revelation, and regard all prophets and "Jisms", (earthly) bodies as the Light of God. (The second are the *doctors of "Ishrakin"* who also, by the purity of their body and the power of austerity, follow the Path of Light and acquire the knowledge of God, and regard all prophets as truly sent by God, but do not pay obedience to any of them, and do not recognize any distinction in diff-

erent religions; and in this *Ishrakin system the occult (Baaten path) is easily attained. And the great, learned Azar Kaiwan and all his disciples also followed this system.*

The third "Sufian" — that is *Durvesh Sahebdel* keep faith in the prophet of their age and according to his systems offer prayers of what is manifest and by the purity of their body and the power of austerity so advance on the Path of the Knowledge of Revelation that they gain more light than the doctors of *Mutalihin* and *Ishrakin*".

Our Master had the extremely rare good fortune of having been impelled to go to Peshawar and admitted, though for a temporary period of some three and a half years only, into the circle of such spiritually advanced *Saheb-Dilan* referred to above. To these holy Sires our Master has most reverently dedicated his first publication — a veritable gem, the booklet entitled "*Ilm-i-Khshnoom Series No. 1*" containing a "Bird's eyeview of "*Ilm-i-Khshnoom*". This booklet in spite of its extreme brevity covers all the salient points about the entire Zoroastrian religion in all its aspects including its practices and rituals. The dedication runs as under:

"In the dear homeland of Iran, before the advent of those dark days, when set the Sun of the Zoroastrian religion and cultural books were destroyed, the great Zoroastrian empire became but a memory of the past and the illustrious Zoroastrian nation was reduced to a handful community. Before the advent of this dark age some far-sighted sages became "*Gofe-nasheen*", i.e. went into seclusion in mountain with the seeds of the Zoroastrian religion. At the sacred feet of these great devotees, the holy *Saheb-Dil Durveshes*, the

Master-Hearts who have renounced the world, this brochure is held with the prayer that our little Zoroastrian community may have for ever the protection of the *Dadgar Dadar Hormazd*, the Creator, and the benign shelter of the Hierarchy of *Amshaspands* and *Yazads* and the *Asho Farohars* (the holy guardian spirits) and the divine guidance of the Holy *Ramz-go*, *Spitaman Zarathustra*, Prophet of Prophets and the blessings of the great *Cofenasheen* blessings of the great *Cofenasheen Sires* of *Ashoi* (purity) and Righteousness of Body, Mind and Soul. *Atha Jamyat Yatha Afreenami*"

(SO BE IT).

(Note).

In the passage quoted above the term "*Durveshes*" is used for the "*Gofenasheen*" Masters. It means these pious and holy men who are free from all worldly attachments and vices. Our Master was the first to explain its *Avestan* derivation — "*Dur*", far away from and "*Vesh*", from "*Tbish*", harm, that is, abstaining from causing harm or injury to the world — whether it be in the form of thought, speech or action. So according to the religion of Zoroaster a "*Durvesh*" means only a true highly developed man or woman who totally keeps away from doing any harm to the good creation.

Our Master informed that prior to or shortly after the fall of the Zoroastrian empire twelve different sects were known to have been formed who followed the Zoroastrian Faith to a greater or lesser extent and among these, the *Saheb-Dilan* followed the Zoroastrian religion in its pristine purity. *The Chaechast Sires who comprise the most advanced souls and who are on a plane higher even than the Saheb Dilan*, stand quite apart. Our Master used to say that this *Chaechast* sect went into seclusion some two-hundred years before the fall of the Zoroastrian empire.

21 NASKS CONCEALED TALISMANICALLY IN UNDERGROUND IRAN

"Our Master informed that everything connected with Mazdayasni Zarthoshti religion including certain rich specimens of Zoroastrian culture and art from the time of the world Deluge down to the fall of the Zoroastrian rule has been preserved in a secret talismanic place in underground Iran called Tangistan.

Similarly the holy sages of Chaechast possess the 21 Nasks composed by holy Zarathushtra, also the 21 Nasks of Manthra-Spenta caused to be composed by his closest pupils under his own supervision, then again the 21 Nasks of 'Mat-Azainti' (Gathas and their commentary), besides the commentary of 21 Nasks in pure Pahlavi of those ages & c., — the whole comprising the essence and kernel of the Zoroastrian Faith exists concealed in underground Iran." ("Parsi Avaz Weekly" p. 5, D/3-3-63).

CONCEPT OF 'SRAOSHAVAREZ'

The holy Sraoshavarez is the chief of the Saheb-Dilan. It was *Marzban Saheb*, the Sraoshavarez of the time, who had imparted all the knowledge to our Master. Sraoshavarez literally means:

"Worker for Sarosh Yazad; or one attuned with Sarosh; or the listener of the Celestial Music of Sarosh Yazad; (*Sraosha* = *Sarosh Yazad*; and *Varez* = *worker*").

He is the highest of the eight grades of priests, the designations of which occur in the Uzirin Gah prayer, and in Vandidad; 5, 57-58 & c. When a priest attains the seventh grade of Zaota he becomes a *Yaozathregar* i.e. one who has the power of imparting purity to other co-religionists. Towering above them all stands the Sraoshavarez, the most holy. His rank is far superior to and higher than even that of the *Dasturan-Dastur* — the high priest of Dasturs. The Sraoshava-

rez is the Zarathushtrotemo or the representative (of his age) of the holy prophet, and the heir to his seat. The high priests of all grades even among the Saheb-Dilan who are spiritually very highly advanced, are strictly enjoined by Nature and by the holy Faith to lead a married life. Thus they are distinct from the Magavs and the Sraoshavarez, who is also a Magav inasmuch as the latter are not destined by Nature to lead a married family life. The Magav class have no need to marry because the soul of a Magav is a complete unit, and an entire entity in the sense that its holy feminine counterpart and its holy masculine counterpart have mingled or blended into one by "*Khaetvadatha*" (Ysn. 12, 9) into one perfect whole Magav soul after both the counterpart have become sin-free.

BEHRAMSHAH WAS DRAWN TO PESHAWAR BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY NIRANG FORMULAE

Our Ustad Saheb has explained how by some mysterious working he had the rare good fortune of coming in contact with this pious group of the Saheb-Dilan in the distant Mt. Demavand in Iran far, far away from his home at Surat in Western India. His leaving his mother's home and being unknowingly drawn to the out-skirts of Peshawar were but a result of the mysterious working of some "*Nirang*" (powerful sacred incantations) recited by his venerable Master, Sraoshavarez Marzban Saheb. At the bottom of all this was his *Bagobakht*, his destined fortune. His entry into Mt. Demavand was in connection with the repaying by the holy Marzban Saheb of a past obligation. Our Master (Ustad Saheb) used to say that some 5,000 years ago in one of their past lives, when Sraoshavarez Marzban was the general in an Iranian battle, and he — Behramshah — was an ordinary soldier, the General Marzban fell wounded by the sword of the enemy when Behramshah carried him away in his arms to a safe place, and saved his life. Our Master further said that when

he had gone to Mount Demavand it was the last visit of the holy Sraoshavarez on earth. So before leaving this world he wanted to repay this obligation under which he was put by Behramshah and hence he by the sacred power of his "Nirang" formulae managed to create a feeling of strong dislike in the mind of Behramshah for his mother's home and mysteriously lured him to the frontiers of Peshawar, where Rasheed Saheb, who was his deputy ("Nayab") had encamped ready to contact him (Behramshah). Hence the invitation to his tent to Behramshah by Rasheed Saheb was according to the Holy Marzban Saheb's plan. That all these events were not simply accidental, Behramshah came to learn only at a later stage, for while they were taking place, Behramshah was totally unaware of the fact that some spiritual force arising out of some holy "Nirang" was working over him and guiding his steps. About the camp at Peshawar, our Master said that a caravan of the Saheb-Dilan goes to Peshawar once in every three to five years for some barter business. They give articles like wool, musk, amber etc. in exchange for cloth and other things.

LIFE IN MT. DEMA VAND

While speaking of life at Mount Demavand, the Master said that the common men

were engaged in agriculture, and led a true Zoroastrian life, and observed all "Tarikat" or canons of purity as enjoined by the Holy Prophet. Before and after partaking of food or drink or performing the daily ablutions or attending to Nature's calls &c. they were scrupulously strict in their observance of the "Baj" rites to keep their "Khoreh" (subtle human magnetism; Aura) pure, and 'Drujih'-proof i.e. free from all evil invisible magnetic effects.

Our Master told us that he himself had stayed for three years on Mt. Demavand. After that period he was sent to visit places like Pamar &c. in Airyana Vaeja on the top of the earthly globe, which took six months. And thereafter he was sent back to India. Behramshah was very unwilling to leave Mt. Demavand. But he was told by the venerable Sraoshavarez Saheb to return to his native place Surat, and lead a married family life there and fulfil his 'Kisas', in accordance with the "Laws of Retributive Compensation and Universal Adjustment with every visible and invisible object and force in the Universe" referred to in the Master's brochure, "Ilm-i-Khshnum Series No. 1" (p. 25). So with a very heavy heart Behramshah returned to India.



WASIL'S 6-LINE METHOD OF WRITING AVESTA LETTERS

The Persian script has passed through three stages of fixation of the form of letters, and their dimensions: first, the earlier method of forming letters with a liberal use of decorative strokes, and made-at-will flourishes of the pen, second, the regimentation of the letters within the limits of four lines, which was a pioneer's work that gave us the **nastaaliq** form of writing, and third, the adaptation of the letters to the requirements of the technique of casting the printing-type. The Avesta script has seen only two extreme forms: first, that in which, like the ancient Persian method, the hand of the writer asserted itself largely through the execution of decorative strokes, by the flourishes of the pen made at random, as well as by twisting and wringing letters almost out of recognition, and the other in which the Avesta letters are pruned and cut to measure to suit the technical needs of the foundryman. Though it was a big and sudden jump from one stage to the other, the essential features of every letter were carefully preserved.

The old letters of the Avesta language may be likened to the Oriental soldiery of the ancient days, dressed in flowing garments, and the letters reproduced from the printing-type may be likened to the modern soldier, draped in close-fitting uniform — the man retaining his soldier-like appearance in both cases.

The pioneers of the **nastaaliq** form of calligraphy followed a few self-styled

rules in fixing the shape and the form, as well as the proportionate dimensions of the different parts of every letter. These rules were logically based on considerations of the beauty of form, the uninterrupted movement of the writer's **kilk**, uniformity of style, and the measures against the need for re-touching the letters, once they were written.

It will have informative value to mention here the unique method adopted by the pioneers of the **nastaaliq** form of calligraphy to measure of every part of a letter in order to ensure the same proportion whenever that particular letter was written with a **kilk** (the reed-pen). The end of the **kilk** is scraped with knife to a certain degree of thinness. Then the tip is tapered to a fine point. Then, a little below the pointed end, to get the required width of the "point" of the **kilk**, the edge of the knife is pressed against the end of the **kilk** to obtain an oblique and broad end of the **kilk**. This oblique and broad end is called the "**kat**". The "**kat**" was fixed as the unit of measure for the various parts of every letter of Persian. Thus, we say, that the length of the long stroke of the Persian letter "sheen" should be eleven "**kats**", and so on. Since, for writing bigger letters, a bigger "**kat**" is needed, the number of "**kats**" will never vary.

In my Avesta Primer, the first of its kind in the whole of Asia, I have presented the Avesta letters neither clothed in their unwieldy, flowing garments of

مقام ہر حرف بانست یکدیگر

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שם רש"י דד סמ ומממ וזז

Syffarwalelewe.

داد و ستاد و بزرگوار و بزرگوار و بزرگوار

ಪ್ರಥಮ ಮಹಾಶಯ

strokes and flourishes of the pen, nor dressed in the close-fitting uniform of the modern soldier. It is only when a letter is denuded of all its flowing raiment of unnecessary strokes and flourishes, or is relieved of its close-fitting uniform, that it will appear in its normal, original wealth of grace and beauty.

What the pioneers in the field of the **nastaaliq** form of calligraphy achieved with their four-line method of writing Persian (and, later, Urdu), I have achieved with my six-line rule of the Avesta Calligraphy. This six-line rule will, I hope, be accepted by both the student in the class-room, and the professional calligraphist in his working place.

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