

Parzine

VOL. I No. 10

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AUGUST 1965





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Pārsiānd

VOL I No. 10

AUGUST 1965

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Single Copy: 75 paise. Yearly subscription for 12 issues Rs. 6. Inland,
 Sh. 15 for U.K. and 2 dollars for U.S.A.

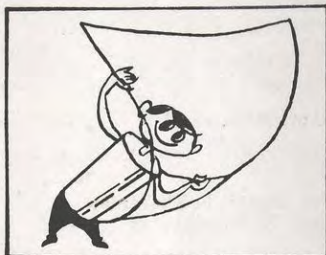
Office Address: C/o Warden's (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd., 378, Grant Road,
 BOMBAY 7.

Published and edited by Editor-Proprietor P. B. Warden from 378, Grant Road, Bombay 7.
 and printed by him at Godrej Memorial Printing Press, Gamadia Colony, Tardeo, Bombay 7.

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Editorial

This issue of Parsiana covers a period of our Navroz-Pateti and Khordad Saal according to Shehnsahi Calendar. We wish a **HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all our subscribers, members of the Editorial Advisory Board, contributors of articles, collaborators of printing press, and all others who have jointly helped us to make Parsiana a satisfactory success. My special thanks are due to Mr. Poonawala senior and his two sons who jointly manage The Commercial Art Engravers — as block-makers to prominent Advertising Agencies and other business concerns — for their care, concern and liberality which have made Parsiana numbers so artistic and elegant.

It is the earnest desire of the Editor-Proprietor to see that Parsiana acts as genuine medium for expression by our younger generation of their hopes, inclinations and aspirations as true Zoroastrians and help revive our specific culture, which may contribute to our better understanding of ourselves and give-and-take of the good of other concurrent cultures around us. This can be achieved only when our younger writers come out with their best — and it is the silent duty of all who like Parsiana to coax them out and contact our world of reality and with the vigour of their youth scatter away the clouds of pessimism about our future integrity. If a Wasil has evil foreboding to harbour a Batliwala (Dr) has a resplendent picture to draw. Read Dr. Batliwala's article in this issue. It is exhilarating New Year news. Amen.

FRONT PAGE PICTURE

ZARATHUSHTRA IN TRAINING UNDER KURUSH BURZIN

This appealing and attractive picture shows Zarathushtra as a boy of about eight to nine years of age, when His father Pourushaspa put Him under a pious and learned priest KURUSH BURZIN for training in religious ceremonies, natural philosophy and understanding of the Universe and the Three R's. All of these He grasped and later improved upon. Mazdayashni Daen existed before Zarathushtra eliminated several of its undesirable traits and practices and substituted belief in only one God — Ahura Mazda and none other. The daen renovated by Him is Mazdayashni Zarathushti Daen, of which we are the present custodians with the onus of leaving it in legacy as we have inherited it in succession. Observe an Atash-Kadeh in a mountain cave.

This picture is Exhibit No. 18 of the Exhibition of Oil Paintings about Zoroaster's Life. Artist :— Naval J. Jijina.

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The Religion of Zarathushtra

by

ERVAD DR. M. D. KARKHANAVALA, B.A., M.Sc. M.S., Ph.D.

Part II THE ERA OF ZARATHUSHTRA

(Continued)

In the previous instalment (Vol. I No. 3) we had concluded from historical and philological evidence that, the era of Zarathushtra given by some Western scholars and the Bundaheshn as 600 B.C., is an impossible date. This erroneous date though enjoying wide popularity in Western literature must be discarded as it stands completely discredited.

We will now re-examine the historical, philological and religious evidence, supplement it with the latest scientific discoveries in the fields of geology and archaeology based on the most modern techniques and draw fresh conclusions about the most probable date. We will then find how all these evidence point to the same period in the early dawn of human civilization viz. about 8400 years from now as the most probable date for the era of Zarathushtra.

Historical evidence

The most reliable historical evidence is provided by the early Greek historians who lived much closer to that discredited date of 600 B.C. and yet have given dates of great antiquity. For example Aristotle who lived from 384 to 322 B.C. has given a date which works out to 6,348 B.C. Eudaxes also gives an identical date, whereas Hermipies and Hermodorse give dates corresponding to 6,209 B.C. These

early Greek historians were not only closer in the timescale to the event, but had much more access to the early history of Iranians, than we probably have now. They lived and travelled in Iran when the great Achemenian empire was flourishing and the libraries of Persepolis and other great Iranian cities were intact.

The late Mr. Mehrjibhai Kooka in his scholarly work on "the Age of Zarathushtra from Babylonian Researches" has examined most critically the archeological, and religious history of ancient Babylon and has established very pertinent facts. He has shown how the Turanians had established a well-settled government in Babylon by about 4,500 B.C.; how these Turanians who, as all Assyriologists agree, had migrated to Babylon from more Northern regions, had given to this new settlement of their's names of places and things as well as introduced names of deities and persons reminiscent and derivable from the older Zarathushtrian (Iranian) system. Thus after about 4,500 B.C. Babylon was ruled by at least **eight** Median kings who called themselves Zoroaster (Zarathushtrish). He cites from Benfey's Monats Namen (names of months) wherein that learned author has shown that most of the names of the Jewish months are

derivable from the Iranian and interestingly enough the order is the same. Since the Jewish months are same as that in Babylonian calendar which has been in use since the time of Hammurabi (about 2,300 B.C.), the early Iranian (Turanian) influence is very evident. Kooka also shows how the more abstract ideas of Zarathushtra about the Amesha Spentas (Ameshaspends) and Yazats had come to be anthropomorphized in Babylonian religious lore through the intervening periods of Iranian occupation. From astronomical calculations based upon the position of the star Sirius at the time of the Autumnal Equinox mentioned in those writings, Kooka shows that this early period of Turanian migration would be about 5,000 to 5,300 B.C. He therefore rightly concludes that since Zarathushtra must be prior to these events, the era of Zarathushtra must be earlier than 5,000 B.C. and in no event can it be after this date.

The Vedas also provide us some valuable clues by providing similarities in Brahmanical and Zarathushtrian literature and religion. Firstly we find that almost upto the time of King Kai Vish-tasp and therefore of Zarathushtra, the Aryan group lived as one. This is evident from the names of earlier heroes and kings found to be common to the Aryan stock. To illustrate a few, we find:

AVESTA

- (1) Kava Us (Commonly- Kaikaus);
- (2) Thraetona (commonly- Faredoon) son of Athawyo;
- (2) Thritha (famous physician);
- (4) Yima Khsheta (commonly Jamshed) son of Vivanghvat;

VEDIC

Kavya Ushanas
 Traitana, son of Aptya
 Trita (also a famous physician)
 Yama (Raja), son of Vaivasvata

The list of such names common to both is extensive, but it terminates just about the time of the Kianian King Vishtasp. Not only that, words of common origin begin to signify the very antithesis of their original meaning. Thus the word "Asura" corresponding to the Avesta word "Ahura" which means "The Creator" or "Source of Existence" is found in this good sense only in the very old Vedic writings. Later it begins to connote, as it does even to-day — the symbolism of all evil — the Devil incarnate. Conversely the word Deva which in the Zarathushtrian religion stands for the Devil, is found to be elevated in the Vedic religion to signify, as it does even to-day the Godhead. It is in fact commonly applied to connote the Dieties.

Consideration of facts like these, lead to the conclusion that the Aryans had a common earlier religion (about which we will discuss later) and a common culture and civilization. Even before the advent of Zarathushtra there was a schism in the ideas and ideologies of this ancient religion. This schism became complete and permanent with the advent of Zarathushtra and his utter and unswerving abhorrence of the practices of the Deva-worshippers, his life-long crusade against them and his eternal message of salvation only through righteousness. The fight that ensued is often vividly

recounted in the Avesta. Eventually the Deva-worshipping fraction migrated away from the old land and after centuries of migration through the Hindukush regions found their way into India and came to be known as the Indo-Aryans.

It is obvious that the era of Zarathushtra must precede the period of migration of the Indo-Aryans. The late Lokmanya Tilak in his classic work on "Orion — the antiquity of Veda" has shown, particularly from astronomical references contained in the Vedas, that even the later Vedas were composed well before 1300 B.C. by which time the Indo-Aryans were well settled in India. He puts the migratory period as lasting about 5,000 to 3000 B.C. Thus the era of Zarathushtra has to be prior to this period, as fights went on within the Aryan settlement for centuries before the actual migration began.

Philological Evidence

Proof of the great antiquity of the Avesta and therefore of Zarathushtra is provided by the internal evidence of the language itself. Among the Iranian languages, the Avesta is the accepted mother of all subsequent languages from the Cuniform, through Pahalavi and Pazend to the present day modern Persian. In the family of Indo-Germanic languages also, the Avesta is about the oldest. And within the Avesta itself the language of the Gathas i.e. the language used by Zarathustra himself, is undisputably considered as the oldest.

When therefore we compare the Avesta, even the latest or the youngest Avesta with the language of the Cuniform in

which Cyrus and his successors in about 500 B.C. inscribed their deeds on mountainside tablets for posterity to note and revere, we find the two to be significantly different. Philologists are agreed that the language of the Avesta could not possibly have transformed into the language of the Cuniform in a period less than at least 1,000 years. Many scholars feel that a period of at least 2 to 3 thousand years must have elapsed as it is very likely that a thousand years were probably required for the language of the Gathas to transform that of the later Avesta. This is not only very probable but also reasonable when one compares similar changes in other languages, for example the English of Chaucer and present day English. In the 600 years, apart from words deriving some antithetical meanings, not very extraordinary changes have taken place, that is to imply that changes in languages are a slow process. In any event, as Dr. Haug has stated, on the basis of linguistic evidence, the era of Zarathushtra could be earlier but not later than about 2,300 B.C.

Comparison with the language and contents of Vedas, would place the period as more than 5,000 B.C.

Modern Scientific Evidence

On the basis of historical and philological evidence one could say that the era of Zarathushtra was anywhere from 7000 to 2000 B.C. To solve this ancient riddle, we now turn to the youngest of sciences — atomic science — to help us out.

One of the off-shoots of the peaceful uses of atomic energy is the ever-increasing application of **radio-isotopes**. A

radio-isotope of a particular element is similar to the naturally occurring stable counterpart in all respects except for a small but fixed difference in weight for its giving off invisible radiation.

About 15 years ago Dr. Libby of the University of California, showed that all living matter (men, plants, animals, seeds etc) acquire by the process of breathing a certain fixed (equilibrium) amount of carbon-14, the radioactive isotope of common carbon, the most important constituent of all living matter. This carbon-14 is formed in the atmosphere due to certain naturally occurring phenomena. When the living matter dies (ceases to breathe and therefore maintain equilibrium), the amount of carbon-14 decreases following the laws of radio-active decay. In the case of carbon-14, the amount decreases by one-half its initial concentration, every 5,700 years. i.e. if we started with say 1000 atoms of carbon-14, then after the first 5,700 years there would be 500 atoms left, after the second 5,700 years, 250 atoms left; after the third 5,700 years period, 125 atoms left and so on. Dr. Libby therefore showed that the amount (no. of atoms) of carbon-14 now present in any ancient material that once lived, would give us directly the time elapsed since it ceased to live.

Using this technique of "Carbon-14 Dating", Dr. Maurice Ewing of the Lamont Geological Observatory, Columbia University showed in 1958 that the last ice-age took place about 11,000 years ago and that prior to this last ice-age, the region of the present North Pole enjoyed a temperate climate where "there was neither heat nor cold". This fact is evidenced by the fossils of the fauna and

flora of the temperate climate found in sediments deeply buried. Similarly the region of the present Sahara Desert in Africa was also flourishing with greenery. But all this disappeared rather abruptly about 11,000 years ago, due to certain phenomena occurring in nature.

The geologists also tell us that during the last ice-age, the huge sheet of ice that covered vast portions of the earth, (the regions of present day northern Europe, America and Asia) was in most places **about two miles thick**. This is deduced from the pressure that would have been exerted on rocks which are found to be crushed flat.

On the basis of these scientific facts about the time and characteristics of the earth before, during and after the ice-age, I showed in 1959 how these help us to unambiguously fix the period of King Jamshed and thence of Zarathushtra.

In the Avesta (Hom Yasht (Yasna H 9) para 4 and 5 and Vendidad Fargard 2) we have a description of the time of King Jamshed and the coming of the ice-age during his reign. It is significant that while in the religious texts of almost all nations there is the story of a flood indicative of a major world cataclysm, the Avesta is unique in being alone to mention and describe the advent of ice. We are told in the Hom Yasht (para 5) that in the reign of the illustrious King Jamshed, there was "neither heat nor cold". These words are identical with those used by the scientists 11,000 years later. The Vendidad further tells us that this fairland of the Aryans — Airyana-vaeja enjoyed a temperate climate and then it

was blighted so that when it recovered it had "ten months of winter and two months of summer" (Fargard 1). In Fargard 2, it is described how Jamshed was told by Ahura Mazda that "on this fair land of the Aryans, there will come a cold like man has never known before" and how the ice will cover the land "from the bottom of the ocean to the height of the highest mountain." He was further told how he should make a cave in the ice and take there the good creation so as to escape the calamity.

The era of Jamshed therefore would be certainly prior to and inclusive of the ice-age, if not also the immediate post ice-age period. This latter possibility is indicated from the fact that we have the Jamshedi Nowroze, when the King with his subjects celebrated the deliverance from the rigours of the cold.

In any event, it is unquestionably proved that the last ice-age took place about 11,000 years ago. We have a certain evidence in the religious literature that Zarathushtra was "born on roj Khordad, mah Fravardin, 2716 years after the deluge was completed". The ice-age and the floods that came in the wake of the melting of huge quantities of ice was such a major event in the those early days, that mankind (and particularly the Aryans) counted their years from that event, just as to-day we refer to some other fixed points like birth of Jesus, reign of King Yazdagard, or of King Vikrama etc. If therefore, we subtract 2,716 from 11,000, we get 8284 years from now as the time for the birth of Zarathushtra.

It must however be borne in mind that the scientific date of 11,000 years is accurate within a couple of centuries. Thus there could be a spread of about 400 years. Nevertheless the date arrived at from this simple calculation is in remarkable agreement with the dates given by the early Greek historians.

It is well-known and well accepted that Zarathushtra was the first to preach a settled agricultural life and to advocate the practice of agriculture. "Yo yaom karaieiti, ho ashem karaieiti" (Whosoever sows grain, sows righteousness) was the theme of his preachings and this was one of the causes of the schism with the other Aryan group that preferred a more nomadic life. Thus one could expect that his birthplace and his period should correspond to the earliest agricultural activities in human history, if one could somehow pinpoint and identify such activity.

The scientific discovery of the earliest cultivated grain (agriculture) reported in August 1964, is therefore of extreme importance and significance to us. Prof. Louis Dupree of the Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A., during his archeological excavations in northern Afghanistan, discovered the oldest **cultivated** grain. The word cultivated is emphasized, because mankind from the very early days of its evolution had lived on wild grain, but cultivated implies agriculture, whereby man began to grow domesticated grain. A carbon-14 dating of these grains gave their age as about 9000 years from now. From a study of the earliest domesticated grain found in other regions, it was concluded

No 1
that agriculture first began in this region of northern Afghanistan (north-eastern Iran — region of Bactria or Balkh, the accepted birthplace of Zarathushtra) and then spread out west to Greece and Mesopotamia. This has been referred to as the Neolithic Revolution, because agriculture was as revolutionary an activity then, as was the industrial revolution a century ago. Thus one finds that the birthplace of agriculture and of Zarathushtra are identical and it is no surprise also that the periods coincide reasonably well. This discovery provides yet another convincing argument against the utterly false and untenable date of 600 B.C., because as is now confirmed from scientific work that agriculture was introduced in the Balkh region in about 7,000 B.C., it is impossible to expect Zarathushtra preaching in 600 B.C. in the same region adoption agriculture as if it was something new. He would be preaching the adoption of this new field of human endeavour only if he lived at the time of or very close after its introduction.

It must also be mentioned that the followers of Ilm-e-Khshnoom have much prior to and independent of these scientific discoveries, maintained that the 300 years mentioned in the Pahalavi literature as the period between the reign of King Vishtasp and the overrunning of Iran by Alexander, do not refer to normal solar year but to a special year which corresponds to 27 normal years. Based on this assumption they have been maintaining that this period is really 8,100 years. This would give a much more antiquated date of 8,400 B.C.

Thus all these dates give us a very ancient period of eight to nine thousand years ago, which may seem to some as exaggerated, and indeed some Western scholars have so considered the dates given by the early Greek historians. I would like to remind and inform such persons that these dates are in no way

* highest evidence
exaggerated. To-day we have unassailable evidence based on scientific investigations that man was not just made all of a sudden over-night and that too in about 4,000 B.C. These erroneous beliefs are based on a blind and unquestioning acceptance of Biblical statements. The scientific facts now tell us, as did the Avesta all through the ages, that man evolved from the primates as a result of the natural evolution of life on this planet. This period when mankind emerged as a separate species was some 2 to 1.6 million (20,00,000 to 16,00,000) years ago and even the final branching took place nearly one million years ago. It must also be borne in mind that this period of human evolution, long as it may seem to us from the standpoint of a human lifetime, is extremely short when compared to the nearly four to five billion (4,000,000,000) years that have elapsed since the earth formed. It is equally important to remember that in the time span of human evolution the period eight, or nine thousand years is an insignificant trifle — may be so far as we are concerned the most important trifle — and represents as a ratio just about as much interval as a few days in an average human life span of 70 years. Looked at it this way the period of human evolution is a still more insignificant trifle of time in the long history of the planet, it would correspond to a few hours. Thus viewed in the wider perspective of world events a period of eight or even ten thousand years is no exaggeration.

From all the evidence that we now have before us, I do not think there can be any argument about the great antiquity of the era of Zarathushtra. It was about 6,000 to 7,000 B.C. with a more probable period of 6,300 to 6,500 B.C. or about 8,300 to 8,500 years from the present.

APOCALYPSE

by

DR. SOHRAB H. BATLIVALA, Ph. D.

I was surprised painfully and shocked very much to read the article under the caption "The Last of the Zoroastrians," by Mr. M. V. A. Wasil, in *PARSIANA* dated June 1965 (Volume I, Number 8, pages 27 and 28). It is all the more regrettable that an enthusiastic person who calls himself a "Zoroastrian Revivalist," should now within six months from establishing his revivalistic movement, envisages decline, fall and annihilation of the very people he is trying to save.

But fortunately, Mr. Wasil is labouring under a grave misapprehension. He seems to be mixing up Zoroastrianism with the way of life displayed by a handful of sophisticated westernised cum Indianised Parsis who hardly practise the religion of their birth in their day to day life. Such persons have no zeal for their hoary and sublime spiritual heritage and to say the least, they are more non-Zoroastrian than Zoroastrian. To visualise the future of Zoroastrianism by observing the behaviour of a few lukewarm and backsliding Parsi individuals, is like estimating the prospects of a great capital after inspecting its slums and cesspools only.

Even comparatively recent history of the Parsi community has furnished proofs of its inherent powers of recuperation and sustaining stamina. Two hundred years back, position of the Parsis in

western India was little better than that of hewers of wood and drawers of water. In fact, the Parsis of that period, if one could judge their appearance from old portraits, looked like Banias wearing *dhotis* and *Kutchhi fentas*. They could hardly be distinguished from middle and lower class Hindus of Gujarat and Kathiawad. Yet, with the advent of British rule, they came into their own and not only regained their nearly lost identity as Parsis, but soon attained an economic position and a social status far in advance of other surrounding Indian communities.

A corresponding situation occurred in Iran also. The Zoroastrians of Iran during the middle of the last century, were groaning under heavy *Jezyeh* (capitation tax) levied on them. They were going over to Islam by the thousands merely to save their worldly possessions from being taken away under the guise of this oppressive tax, since it was not payable by the Moslems. A critical situation developed and it looked as if the few hundred remaining Zoroastrian families would also be wiped out in a matter of months. They were just managing to survive by taking to unapproachable mountainous regions and far off deserted villages of Iran. A timely succour from the Parsis of Bombay and the indefatigable labours of the late Mr. Manekji Limji Hataria, in getting the tax abolish-

ed for good, saved this remnant from extinction. To-day, the tables have been turned in Iran. Many a born Moslem of Iran, on coming to know of the grandeur and glory of ancient faith, eagerly wants to embrace it ! I am told on good authority that recently, a certain Anjuman of the Zoroastrians of Iran, was pressed to admit such born Moslem Iranians into the Zoroastrian fold. To test whether it was a genuine gesture on their part, the Anjuman invited written and signed applications from those non-Zoroastrian Iranians, who were anxious to adopt the Zoroastrian faith. It will be surprising and heartening to persons like Mr. Wasil to know that in a matter of days, four hundred non-Zoroastrians came personally to the Offices of that particular Zoroastrian Anjuman and registered their names and addresses with the Office-bearers, as individuals willing to embrace *Mazdayasni Zarathoshti Deen* :

As a concrete proof to show that such persons were not wanting to initiate themselves into the Zoroastrian fold with any ulterior object or motive, but on the other hand, were willing to sacrifice their own material resources in the cause of the Zoroastrian religion, it is worth mentioning that during the last ten years or so, scores of voluminous and costly books on Avesta and Pahlavi texts, general principles of Zoroastrianism and popular works on the culture of ancient Iran, have been published in the Persian language by these very people. The books are written or compiled by authors who are Moslems, their publication is financed by Moslems and they are bought and read by thousands who are mostly Moslems.

Looking to the bulk of this neo-Zoroastrian literature, well over a million Rials of Iranian currency must have been invested and spent by these pro-Zoroastrian elements of modern Iran. Zoroastrians of India or Iran hardly come into the picture of this very costly and risky venture of production, publication and distribution of this new kind of Persian literature that is now being brought into existence. I have read a number of such books and can vouch for the fact that they are worthy of the pen of any learned Dastur. What is particularly striking about them is their diction and tone. The authors being Persians themselves, know the psychological manner in which a normal Iranian would react and therefore the style adopted by them is one that would readily attract an Iranian mind to appreciate the lofty principles of Zoroastrianism. Some of these works are actually written in the spirit of active propaganda. They are addressed specifically to non-Zoroastrian Iranians to popularise Zoroastrianism amongst them in a perfectly inoffensive and reverential manner. Persian newspapers and periodicals published in Iran often contain scholarly articles throwing light on different aspects of Zoroastrianism of interest to the student and layman alike. Unfortunately, the Parsis of India are almost totally unaware of this astonishing renaissance that is silently sweeping down Iran, in favour of their ancient faith. What is most remarkable about this movement is the fact that the Government of Iran and leaders of enlightened public opinion there encourage all those who are now interested in this great cause which has

as its slogan, "Back to the Ancient Iranian Culture."

So I am not at all pessimistic about the future of Zoroastrianism. Over 500 Moslem students in the Universities of Iran are now studying optionally Avesta and Pahlavi languages of the Zoroastrian scriptures either for their graduation or for their doctorate. Their Professors are also Moslems, but well versed in Zoroastrian lore. Talks over the Tehran Radio are broadcast at short intervals on various topics connected with ancient and medieval Zoroastrian observances and religious practices, such as explaining significance of festivals like Naoroz, Tirgan, Mehrgan and Sadeh. In textbooks for school-going children prepared in Iran under the direction of Ministry of Education, great emphasis has been laid on the civilisation and culture of Iranians of the pre-Islamic times. In all probability, many of these children will turn out to be the torch-bearers of the ancient faith in days to come. Even now, many notable persons with pro-Zoroastrian leanings, come forward to give lectures in public on topics connected with the religion of Zarathushtra. Such lectures are usually well attended, particularly by non-Zoroastrians ! While the Second World Zoroastrian Congress was in sessions at Bombay during January 1964, I met a scholarly and prominent Iranian gentleman and inquired of him about the

number of non-Zoroastrian Iranians who would be willing to embrace the Zoroastrian religion on their own initiative. He answered me without any hesitation whatsoever, "Fifty thousand souls at least to begin with and about one-third of the entire population of Iran by the end of the next generation." It means that without any attempt at proselytism as such, there are seven million potential Zoroastrians with us right now at this very moment !

Hence, we Indian Parsis of the present generation are not the last of the Zoroastrians on earth; rather, we are the witnesses to a new race of Zoroastrians that is unobtrusively rising elsewhere. As the Persians would say, "May their tribe increase!" When zeal and enthusiasm for the Zoroastrian religion began to flicker in Iran over twelve centuries ago, we Parsis kept them burning in India; now if we were to disintegrate here according to the dark forbodings of our Jeremiahs, the faith is being revived brightly in its own native land by Soshyant-like souls.

Thus the wheel of our religious history goes round and round. As one of its sides goes down, the other goes up. Zarathushtra truly sang about the Powers of Good and Evil swaying the course of Nature together and by turns like the eternal ebb and flow of the ocean tides :

"And when together did these Spirits Twain
 Foregather at Creation's early dawn,
 Life did One make, the Other made Not-Life ;
 And thus Creation's purpose is achieved ;
 Dar is the mind of those that cling to False,
 But rightly shines the mind that holds to Truth.
 Of these Twin Spirits he that is the False
 Doth ever choose performing evil deeds,
 But Righteousness doth choose the Holy One ;
 He who would clothe himself in Light of Heav'n,
 He who would satisfy Lord Ahura,
 Let him through deeds of Truth choose Mazda's Way."

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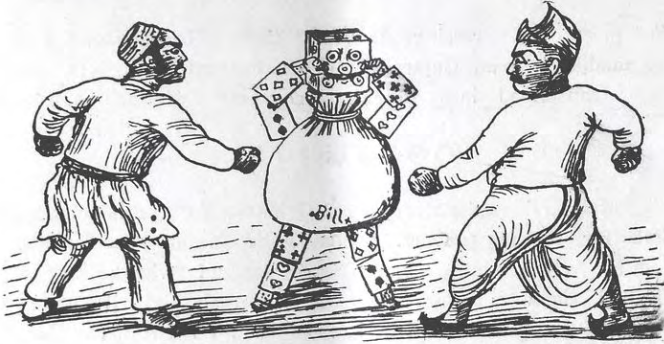
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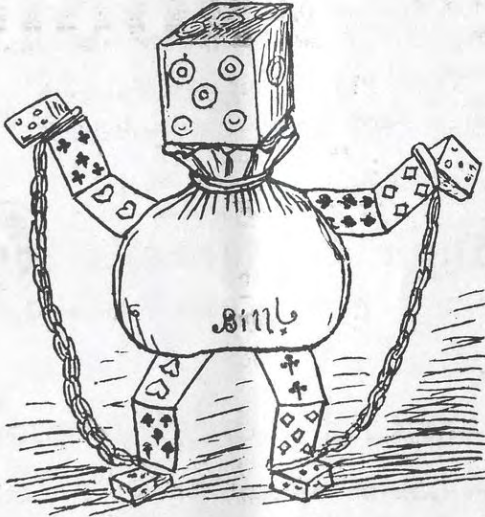
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Firdausi's Satire on Sultan Mahmud

by

KHURSHED NAVROJI PAVRI, B.A. (Hons)

In the biographies of Firdausi we are told that Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, having appreciated the large number of couplets of the proposed SHAH-NAMAH already composed by Firdausi, commissioned him to complete his work, with the promise of the payment of one gold coin (dinar) for every couplet he wrote. Firdausi completed the SHAH-NAMAH in about 60000 couplets, and expected a reward of 60000 dinars for his labour of over 30 years. But Sultan Mahmud, at the instigation of his minister, Hasan Maimandi, and others, sent to Firdausi a reward of 60000 silver coins (dihrems). Firdausi is said to have been at a Hamamkhana when the messenger carrying the silver coins reached him. Firdausi got very wild when he saw that the Sultan had not kept his promise, and had sent to him silver coins instead of gold ones; and in his disappointment and rage he gave away 20000 coins to the messenger, another 20000 coins to the keeper of the Hamamkhana, and the remaining 20000 to a Sherbet-seller, who was sitting outside the Hamamkhana. Then Firdausi is said to have written a very scathing satire on Sultan Mahmud, denouncing him and his ancestry, and then to have fled away from Ghazni.

The satire became very well-known and popular, and it has survived along with the monumental epic of the SHAH-NAMAH. Every edition of the SHAH-

NAMAH includes the satire as well. However, the number of couplets given in the various editions varies to a considerable extent. The satire, as generally given, consists of 100 to 150 couplets. The Gujarati edition of Kutar Brothers gives 116 couplets. The wording of some of the couplets is slightly different in some editions.

Upto recent times there did not appear to be any doubt about the authenticity of the satire, and it was accepted by Iranian, Indian, and Western scholars as a fact that Firdausi himself had written it. It was, however, admitted that there might have been some interpolations, variations and changes here and there, on account of the fact that in those days copies of books had to be written by hand by different scribes.

However, some critics have begun, of late, to throw a serious doubt on the authorship of the satire. They state that Firdausi could not have written the satire, and it was the composition of some one else, who passed it off as a work of Firdausi, and later other persons added some couplets of their own. In the first place, these critics say that Sultan Mahmud, being a Turk, could not have been interested in the glories of ancient Iran; and therefore the generally accepted story that Sultan Mahmud ordered Firdausi to write the epic and promised to pay him one gold coin for every couplet

is a myth. Further, if there was no such promise, there could be no question of a breach of it, and consequently there was no cause for the alleged disappointment and fury on the part of Firdausi, resulting in a foully abusive satire. These critics say that the satire was originally said to consist of about half a dozen verses only, and gradually the number rose to about 150, as various persons went on adding couplets of their own. They contend that the satire, in its present version, contains some verses which are plagiarisms, and some of the couplets have been torn out of the context from the SHAH-NAMAH itself. They say further that in many couplets Firdausi's grand style is absent and the diction is poor, and they are decidedly the composition of some inferior versifiers. These critics have come to the conclusion that taken as a whole the satire is entirely spurious and falsely attributed to Firdausi. They affirm that a broad-minded, gentle, noble, and tolerant man like Firdausi could never have written this vile satire. We must grant that these critics are, no doubt, actuated by the praise-worthy motive to offer a tribute to the memory of a noble soul and to clear his character of what they consider to be a sad calumny.

Now let us examine the arguments of the critics in the light of what Firdausi has himself said in the SHAH-NAMAH. He has sometimes interrupted his narrative to give vent to his personal feelings on one subject or the other, and we may consider such couplets, apart from any external evidence, so as to try to assess the correct position.

It was a custom, in the times in which Firdausi flourished, for men of art and culture to seek the patronage of some rich and influential persons in a high position, who might appreciate their work and take them under their patronage and protection. It was not possible in those days for such intellectual men to earn a decent livelihood without such patronage. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni is known to have entertained in his court poets and men of art and culture.

Firdausi says in the SHAH-NAMAH that having written large portions of his epic, for twenty years he was in search of a patron, who would appreciate his work and give him a suitable reward, and to whom he might dedicate his mighty composition. His verses in this connection read :—

“Moreover, fortune is not friendly to me. There is none to purchase this work of labour.

Thus I lived and kept my composition secret.

I kept to myself my poem for twenty years, and waited to see who could be worthy of such a treasure.”

From the brief account of his life which is available it appears that Firdausi must have been about 60 years old, when he could get an access into the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Firdausi has written a panegyric on Sultan Mahmud in the early part of the SHAH-NAMAH, and it is quite evident therefrom that Sultan Mahmud had offered Firdausi his patronage and encouraged him to finish his work. Firdausi

starts the panegyric with the following couplet :—

“I extended my hand in writing this NAMAHA in the name of the exalted monarch.”

This verse shows that he dedicates his SHAH-NAMAHA to Sultan Mahmud. The verse in praise of Sultan Mahmud, which follows, may sound rather as fulsome flattery, for instance :—

“Ever since the Creator created this world there has appeared no monarch like him.

He has adorned the earth from east to west, and with his lustre a gold mine has appeared.”

Here and there in the course of the narrative also Firdausi has sung the praises of Sultan Mahmud. In one place he says :—

“The lord of the world, to whom the Moon and Saturn make obeisance, — his illustrious name has become the crown on the head of my NAMAHA, and by his grace my blackened heart shines like ivory.”

It seems clear from the dedication and the verses in praise of Sultan Mahmud that Firdausi, who had already composed a large part of his SHAH-NAMAHA, completed the work under the patronage of the king. Firdausi does not say anywhere that the king had promised to pay a gold coin for every couplet he wrote, but the inference from what he says is quite clear and logical that he expected a very handsome reward for his task. That he was never in affluent circum-

stances is evident from some of his verses. He says :—

“May you not live too long in this world. Old age and poverty are a calamity.

My age has gone beyond 60 years, and I have still to undergo toil and trouble. Thus have I spent 65 years in poverty, indigence, and drudgery.”

Taking all the above facts into consideration, we may be safe in coming to the conclusion that the reward given for his tremendous labour fell far short of what he had expected to be a suitable reward, Firdausi must have felt bitterly disappointed and aggrieved at what he must have thought to be a perfidy on the part of the Sultan. Human nature being what it is, it is but natural that in spite of the nobility of his soul and the magnanimity of his heart, Firdausi was moved to give full vent to his feelings of acute disappointment and condemn the conduct of the king. The only way in which he might do so would be to write some verses, for writing poetry came natural to him. Considering the state of his mind at the time, we need not be surprised that he should have expressed himself quite bitterly in scathing verses, which are in contrast with the verses of the panegyric, in which he had praised Mahmud to the skies.

Even during the course of writing the SHAH-NAMAHA Firdausi had become aware of the fact that some hostile influences in the court of Sultan Mahmud were working against him and trying to prejudice the mind of the king against

him. He interrupts his narrative to say:—

“My heart would have been happy with Sultan Mahmud, if the low-born had less access to him.

A slanderer grew envious of my work and spoilt my market before the king. The king did not look into these ‘dastans’. The fault lay with the evil tongue and my bad luck.”

In the satire Firdausi expresses exactly similar sentiment :—

“A miscreant — may he never see a good day — represented my noble verses as bad. He painted me black before the king, and made my shining star look like burnt coal.”

It is quite feasible that these antagonistic elements in the court succeeded in the end in making the Sultan change his mind about the amount of the reward.

It is true that there is no definite and standard text of the satire, and the number of the couplets varies in different editions. When we consider the circumstances in which the satire is said to have been written, and the subsequent fleeing of Firdausi from Ghazni, we may be safe in concluding that only one copy of the satire existed at that time. In those days when books were written and copies were made by hand, mistakes of commission and omission often occurred. Sometimes even the prejudice of a scribe copying a work played some part in interpolating, omitting, or altering some lines or words. Firdausi is said to have composed about 60000 couplets of the SHAH-NAMAH, but different editions give a varying number of couplets,

ranging from 45000 to 54000. Different versions are also given. Some scholars claim to find some spurious couplets even in the SHAH-NAMAH. For instance, the very popular verses, which are constantly quoted by Parsis, occurring in the ‘dastan’ of King Hoshang, about Parsis not being fire-worshippers but worshippers of ‘Pak Yazdan’ are considered by some as spurious. We refer to the couplets beginning with —

“Magui keh atash parastan budand,
Parastandehe pak yazdan budand.” etc
meaning :—

“Do not say that they were fire-worshippers, — they were worshippers of Pak Yazdan. Just as the Arabs have before them the stone-arch (at the time of prayers), so they have before them the resplendent fire.”

Kutar Brothers say in the foot-note that these couplets are to be found in some old hand-written copies of the SHAH-NAMAH, but they are not found in other printed standard editions. Similarly in the ‘dastan’ of King Jamshid there occur seven couplets, which tell us about Saroash Yazad appearing before King Jamshid and instructing him to put on the ‘Kusti’ on the waist, whereby he could overcome all demons. Some scholars believe that these couplets are spurious. Kutar Brothers say in the foot-note that these couplets are not to be found in the printed editions of the SHAH-NAMAH, but they are found in some old hand-written copies. The omission of these couplets in other editions may perhaps be due to the prejudice or

dislike of scribes making copies, who might be bigoted Mohomedans and who did not like to mention these couplets relating to strictly Zoroastrian rites.

The object of referring to these verses is only to show that there are variations even in the SHAH-NAMAH. In these circumstances, if there are interpolations and variations in the satire here and there, that fact cannot make the entire satire spurious. The satire is accepted as the composition of Firdausi, giving vent to his bitter feelings of dejection and grief at not receiving the reward he expected, and believing that all the labour of lifetime had gone to waste. It is, however, admitted that all the verses as given in the different versions might not be strictly Firdausi's own composition.

As regards the contention that the satire is lacking in the grand style of Firdausi and that it is poor in diction, opinions differ, and this contention is not generally accepted. Mr. P. B. Vachha says in his book *FIRDOUSI AND THE SHAHNAMA* :—

“It is to the credit of Firdousi that even here (i.e. in the satire) he has maintained the lofty level of his normal utterance.”

In his book “*IRAN AND ITS CULTURE*” Prof. F. C. Davar says :—

“When Sultan Mahmud failed to give the promised reward to Firdausi, the latter vented his ruffled feelings in a far-famed satire, which led subsequen-

tly to the growth in Persian literature of satirical poetry.”

We may conclude this article by quoting some well-known and popular couplets from the satire :—

“Oh, you world-conquering Shah Mahmud, if you are not afraid of any man, at least fear God.

They (i.e. kings before you) treated their subjects with proper justice, and they were worshippers of ‘Pak Yazdan’. I toiled a great deal during these thirty years, and I revived the glories of Iran in this Parsi history.

Like Jesus I have brought to life again all the dead.

Mighty edifices will be ruined by rain and the heat of the sun. But I have laid, with my poetry, the foundation of a splendid palace, which will not be damaged by storm and rain.

Ages will pass after the writing of this NAMAH, but those who have any wisdom will continue to read it.

Do not entertain any hope of good from the low-born, for a negro cannot turn white by washing.

If you go to a perfume-seller, your entire dress will be permeated with perfume. If you go near a coal-dealer, you will get nothing but blackness.

When my age is now nearing eighty, my hopes have, once for all, been quite shattered.

All my toil came to waste; there was no reward for the labour of thirty-five years.

If the ruler of the world had not been
niggardly, he would have given me a
seat on a throne.

If the king had a real king for his
father, he would have placed a crown
of gold on my head.

If the mother of the king had been a
lady of noble birth, She would have
given me gold and silver till the heap
reached my knees.

Although my treasure has been wasted
here before the king, there has accu-
mulated in the other world a treasure
of my toil.

When a poet is aggrieved, he sings
satire, and that satire survives till
doomsday."

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KHSHNOOM

Advent of Zarathushtra

by P. N. TAVARIA

For tracing the advent of Zarathushtra on earth, it is necessary to gain some idea of the conditions prior to the Prophet's descent. From the standpoint of Zoroastrian religion, our earthly globe is made up of two main sections, one **Thrishva** (Farvardin Yt. 3) the unknown holy one-third also called '**Khanirath Bami**' or the **Golden Shore** (Yt. 10, 15). It is situated in the Arctic region near the North Pole. The other, the **remaining two-thirds** is the wicked known material world.

We learn from Vandidad 19; 4, 11 that holy Zarathushtra was born in Airyana Vaeja located in the above Thrishva which is buried under mountain-deep snow since over 10,000 years. Most scholars do not know of its existence and geography. According to Vandidad 2, 22 heavy snow-flakes with intense cold caused the Ice-age. It was foretold to king Jamshid by Ahura Mazda. During this 'ice-age, the population in Airyana Vaeja known as the Aryans, (lit. meaning '**of noble birth**') gradually moved down in batches, to their subsequent ancient fatherlands in the known material world. Gayomard was their first king. These now original fatherlands were unpopulated since the time of the world Deluge that had occurred some 27,000 years ago. The Prophet-kings that ruled there during these 27,000 years are described in "Dabistan". The world has

resumed its run of the current **Zarvane Daregho Khadat** (lit. **self-created long Time**), which according to Khshnoom is a cycle of 81,000 years' duration. It is now over 14,500 years since that resumption commenced, and Zarathushtra descended about 5000 years after this commencement.

However, before the Aryans arrived on the plains of the known material world, inferior souls had begun to appear on the earth as demons and had assumed possession of the lands. Here started great feuds. The Aryan leaders possessed great spiritual powers of the White side, while the aborigines were masters of evil arts of sorcery and other great powers of the Dark side. These demons led their lives as robbers, decoits &c. Thus till the advent of Zarathushtra there were only two sections — one, of the White side and the other, of Dark. There was no revealed religion. All that existed then of the White side was spirit invested in matter itself. Zarathushtra revealed Faith first time. Therefore any belief in "conversion of King Vishtaspa" is obviously erroneous. (Dawn & Twilight, p. 33 by Prof. Zaehner).

For over 4000 years prior to the advent of Zarathushtra on the earth, the sky was overcast to immense heights with the Satan's monstrously inflated body of

Darkness possessing consciousness, from which there were most dreadful visitations on earth, influx of locusts, famines, great fires, earthquakes, all kinds of lusts &c. &c.

When such was the dire condition on the earth, **Geush Urva the sub-angelic potentiality, appointed for the protection of souls on earth**, raises his plaint to the Creator (Ysn. 29, 1) whereupon Ahura Mazda showed Geush Urva the Kehr, the spirit body, of Zarathushtra and assured him that He would create him, who would show to mankind the path of purity (Bd. 4,3). Geush Urva does not mean "soul of the ox" as rendered by Prof. Zaehner (ibid. p. 76). As stated above **Geush Urva is the sub-angelic potentiality, being actually the animated phantom of the collective blissful aspect of the totality of Urvans (souls) on earth**. It is allegorically called Geush, because it possesses the blissful characteristics in common with the cowkind. Thus the word 'Geush' in Geush-Urva, Geush-Tashan and Geush-aevo-datayao does not mean the quadruped, but the blissful potentiality — that rests in & derives from Tashan (our modeller in heaven) and aevo-dat (the first law) that created cosmos out of chaos.

In the warfares between the two parties, Gayomard lost his son, Shyamak, but subsequently Hoshang, Tehmurasp, Kershasp, Faridun and other kings and warrior-saints in their respective ages fought against those demons, kept them under control, and in the golden age that followed, turned the material world into Khanirath Bami (lit. Golden Shore), that

is, rendered the world Satan-free and felicitous. The Peshdadian and Kayanian kings, though they often succeeded in warfares, could not completely suppress the demons. They knew of the oncoming of Zarathushtra and eagerly awaited his advent. Dinkard (VII; 1; 59-60) informs us that during the golden age King Jamshid forewarned the demons of their destined defeat and overthrow at the birth of Prophet Zarathushtra. At last when proper time arrived, preparations were completed in the heavens for the descent of Zarathushtra. Several incidents and descriptions of the Prophet's biography are condensed from Dr. F. S. Chiniwalla's "Khshnoom Nikize Vehdin" Vol. I. This writer respectfully acknowledges his debt to the learned author for this and many elucidations in Khshnoom philosophy.

When Ohrmazd had produced the suitable material environment for Zarathushtra, the glory which was at the time with Ohrmazd, fled first on to the Aries, thence to the Endless Lights (zodiac), thence to the Sun, thence to the Moon, thence to the Stars, and thence to the fire which was in the house of Zoish; from that fire it fled on, on to the wife of Frahim-rvanan-Zoish, (father of Prophet's mother), when that maiden was born who became the mother of Zarathushtra. (Sanjana's translation Vol. XIII of Dinkard 1, 1-3).

From that glory the light fled simultaneously into the earth and escaped into the sky; then its flight became apparent at a distance, so that it was said by the

people in the suburb of Frakht-ravanan-Zoish that the light burns through self-combustion, that is, it needed no fuel. (ibid. 4-5).

The demons on account of their discomfiture by that glory, brought on that country dire winter, all kinds of pestilence and other tyrannical enemies; and they impressed on the minds of the people of the country that such a calamity had come to the country owing to the witchcraft of this girl. The people of the land quarrelled with the parents about the sorcery of the girl that was causing calamity, insisting on removing her out of the country. (ibid. 6).

The father of the girl remonstrated with the people over the unjust allegation of witchcraft against his daughter. "When that girl was born in my house, her entire halo emanated from behind (her person) as the apparent light of a fire, and from the whole of her person superior light set forth in the dark night when this girl was seated in the innermost part of the house where there was no fire (or light). In the house where a large fire was burning and if the girl was seated there, the burning became more dazzling owing to the light (emanating) from her body; **a wizard was never known who was so glorious.**" (ibid. 7-8).

But owing to the instigation of the demons and disbelievers who belonged to the country, the inhabitants were not satisfied, so the father ordered the girl to go to Patiritaraspo, (Paeterasp) the father of the family that lived in the country of the Spitamas. The girl assented to her

father's order. The demons caused the mischief with an evil design for removing the girl from her house, but God made it the cause of her marriage with Pourushaspo, the father of Zarathushtra. Here she occupied the highest place in the family of the Spitamas. She was inspired. She performed religious ablution, and proceeded to Patiritaraspo's village. At that stage the glory came to Pourushaspo the son of Patiritaraspo. (ibid. 9-13).

The Creator Ohrmazd passed on the Fravahar of Zarathushtra to the parents of Zarathushtra through a Hom (Hao-ma) plant, through miracle-producing tillage. (ibid. 14).

With regard to the necessity of the advent of Zarathushtra on this earth, we are told that when this material world and mankind first came into existence, human beings, for countless ages, led holy life. Hence there was no need of Zarathushtra to descend on the earth to teach mankind the anti-demonical laws i.e. the laws of purity. But this necessity arose subsequently when inferior souls descended on the earth and Satan succeeded in his guiles. It was at this stage that the Ameshaspends formed together the material of Zarathushtra and they seated his Fravahar (spiritual essence) within. At that time Zarathushtra appeared to the arch-angels as having a body like their own (Ham Karpih). This means that the Prophet was not like worldly human beings subject to family life, but his body was lustrous like that of Ameshaspends (ibid. 15-16).

Airyana Vaeja, the Birth-place of Zarathushtra

We know from Vandidad (19, 4 & 11 ; Bd. 20 & 24, 3) that Zarathushtra was born in Airyana Vaeja. Total ignorance exists in philology with regard to Airyana Vaeja, for which Prof. Henning states:

“The Avesta places them (Zoroaster and Kae Vishtaspa) in a country vaguely named Airyana Vaeja”. **

He calls it ‘vaguely named’ because the name of Airyana Vaeja is not found in the geography of the Satan-infested material world. Airyana Vaeja is situated in Thrishva (Yt. 13, 3) the unknown holy one-third of the earthly globe located in the Arctic region and buried under mountain-deep snow, as stated above. Airyana Vaeja means the land bearing noble seeds of blissfulness. In Vandidad 2, 22 we find the falling of this snow foretold to King Jamshid by Ahura Mazda as follows :

“O fair Yima, son of Vivanghan, Upon the material world the evil winters are about to fall, that shall bring the fierce deadly frost shall make snow-flakes fall thick even as aređvi deep on the highest tops of mountains.” (S.B.E. Vol. IV).

In Thrishva is the holy land Airyana Vaeja, where Zarathushtra was born, and which was the cradle of the Aryan race. This Thrishva is the seventh and the only terrestrial Keshvar. Karshvare or Keshvar technically means country or

residing place of saintly souls who are referred to in Meher Yt. 15 as ‘Gava shayana, Gava shitimcha’, where ‘gava’ lit. kine, does not mean quadruped kine, but holy souls who have also the philanthropic characteristics as of the kine. **Thrishva, otherwise called ‘Khanirath Bami’ is buried under snow since some 10,000 years and opens up when the known material world is submerged by the waters of the Deluge.** Prof. Zaehner being unaware of this assumes Khanirath Bami to be ‘Central mythical clime’ (“Zurvan..” p. 9 footnote) taking the hint from ‘Bundehesh’ 11, 1.

In the Airyana Vaeja there is a holy mountain called ‘Haraiti Barez’ (Yt. 19, 1) or Mt. Alborz. On the top plateau at the highest altitude was the ‘Vara’ on which was situated the prophet’s father Pourushaspa’s mansion where Zarathushtra was born. Here on this plateau flowed from the far heights of the planetary world Asha-Chithra and Vohu-Chithra, the vibrationary currents bearing Chithra (seeds) of holiness, (Asha) and goodness (Vohu). This flowing of such sublime vibrationary currents is allegorically depicted as flowing of the river ‘Drejya’.

On the slopes of each side of the above Haraiti Barez, there are several plateaus. In those distant ages, there were sublime Markaz, (stages) **and residential places called Vara.** Demavand, Pairi-Daz, (Paradise), Bahman-daz, Pamar, Siraz, Fir-daus &c. were here built by different illustrious kings of the Pairyo-tkaesha

* Prof. Henning’s “Ratanbai Katrak Lecture’ No. 3, 1949, p.43.

class. On its first plateau called Pamar was king Jamshid's Vara, (Bd. 32, 2). Vara is a talismanically protected area either subterranean or on the surface of the earth so sanctified that Satan cannot find entry there and desecrate it. Airyana Vaeja is the right place for the Advent of the Holy Soul. It is the place of choice for the good reason that prior to the coming of Zarathushtra this land was ruled over by profoundly learned worshippers of God and they already had Sipasian Creed, a lofty and noble system of moral code—but no revealed religion.

Prophet-Kings of Airyana Vaeja

"Dabistan" by Mohsin Fani (Shea-Troyers' transl. from Persian, Vol. I: p. 22 seq.) makes mention of **four dynasties** that ruled in Airyana Vaeja (during the above said period of some 27,000 years,) viz. **Maabadian, Jiyān, Shācan and Yasanian** and gives an idea of the paradisiacal existence and the prophet-kings that ruled there:—

"The first dynasty was known as Maabadian. King Abad Azad withdrew from temporal power and walked in the path of devotion and seclusion. It is recorded, that in their time the realm was highly cultivated; treasures were abundant; the Mobeds celebrated, profoundly learned, worshippers of God, undefiled, equally eminent in good words and deeds....."

They introduced the rules of Divine worship, the knowledge of God, virtuous deeds, purity of conduct modes of diet, clothing, the rites of marriage, the observance of continence, with all kinds of science, letters, books, professions, solemn festivals, banquets, the distinctions of the two sexes with respect to exposure and privacy, the diffusion of equity, justice, and all that was praiseworthy.

There flourished the Sipasian creed; in the Mahabad's empire. All the individuals of this chosen race, with the exception of Zohak, were mobeds of equity, characterized by justice and piety, perfected in words and deeds. In this holy family some were prophets, all were saints, righteous and God-fearing persons, with realms and armies maintained in the highest order.

They were so eminently pious, that in no degree whatever did wickedness enter into their conversation or actions, nor did they at any time deviate from the **'Payman-i-Farhang' or excellent covenant** which is the code of Mahabad, nor omit the performance of any duty;....."

Genealogy of Zarathushtra

The genealogy of Zarathushtra commences from King Gayomard. To enumerate briefly, the lineage goes down from Gayomard to king Yima (Jamshed), then to Fraedun, then to Manush-chihr

and then to Spitama. From Spitama the lineage runs successively as under :

Spitma
 Hardhar
 Arejadharshn
 Paetrasp
 Chikhshnush
 Haechadasp
 Urugadhasp
 Patiritarasp
 Paorushasp
 Zarathushtra

The above line came down from Manush-ohihr to Spitma and the seed of the forbearers of the Prophet from Spitama was highly purified. In order to cause the soul of the Prophet to descend on the earth, the fire-energies of his ancestors which (fire-energies) bore blissful influence of Jupiter were rendered finer and finer, on account of which the line of Spitama became more and more sublime in priesthood. From this exalted line descended the "Soul Farrokhtum," (most auspicious) known as Holy Spitma Zarathushtra. (Abridged from Pahlavi Dinkard Vol. VII; 1, 70 — Sanjana Edition).

Sources of Biography

The **original Avestan source** of the holy Prophet was the **13th Nask (volume) 'Angheush' which is lost**. But the summary of 21 Nasks is preserved in Pahlavi of which **Spend Nask** treats of "..... the Fravahar and the soul of the Prophet ; of the nature of his spiritual birth in Heaven, and his material birth on earth; of his conference with the Deity, at thirty years of age, and the occurrences of seven such conferences in ten years. It described the many miracles and marvels attributed to the Prophet, which are collected in the Seventh Book of the Dinkard" &c. (From "Zoroastrianism Ancient & Modern" (p. 6 by Ervad P. S. Masani).

Afterwards when glory came to Zarathushtra, the descendant of Spitama, during his conference with Creator Ohrmazd He received from the beloved omniscient Creator Ohrmazd, comprehensive knowledge of the functions of priesthood (Athornan) and warriorship (Rathestaran) and husbandry (Vastroukshan) and artisanship (Hutoxan), and he accepted the entire responsibility of bringing by command of the Creator the Mazdayasnian Revelation to king Kae Vistasp and of propagating that light in Hapta Keshwar (the seven continents) until Renovation of the Universe.

TWO SONNETS ON THE FIRST KHORDAD—SAL

When the bright Sun accompanies the Ram,
The Ram that brings the Spring and all her joys,
The Ram that darkness and its train destroys
And clears the air of cloud and mist and sham ;
When Dawn in flushing smiles before him swam
With all her fairies whom she fain employs ;
When all the evil Druj poor Earth annoys
And all his forces pain and wrongs undam ;
On his sixth round of All-prosperity,
Full five and eighty centuries ago,
Is usher'd in this world Thy holy birth,
And with Thy smile all nature breathes more free ;
Since then Thy Birth-Day finds the same bright glow
Of great delight, Zarathushtra ! on this Earth.

ARDESHIR F. KHABARDAR

The sun arose on morn of Khordad day,
Month Farvardin refreshed the man and beast,
So sleeping Nature woke in Light from East,
To hold the host of darkness dense at bay.
The Izads formed in sky a Milky Way
And shone as Tishtar, even one the least ;
On Universe, their eyes they liked to feast
And sing "Ahunavar," Ahura Mazda's lay.
Then mother Earth regained her robust health,
The Druj was thinned to fraction decimal,
As Asha placed all evil under ban ;
Air, water, land resounded through their wealth,
The mineral, the plant, the animal,
"Hail Zarathushtra, smiling Athravan !"

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Dr. DADABHAI NAOROJI

(A Character Study)

by

P. B. WARDEN

Many have ideas on their bookshelves and in their brains ; but a dead load of ideas does not matter, what matters is the power to move another's heart and activate another's mind. Only he who can inspire can move and activate others.

Dadabhai's uprightness, his principles and his crystal-clear virtues determined the life-line of his daily routine and his political ideologies. He inspired all around him not by precepts but by example. His soul evolved through versatile aptitudes to clean mind and conscience. He was needed for India of the time depressed with miseries, limp with lassitude, condemned by stupor, unable to rise not knowing how. Poverty stricken, crushed, disrupted race was listless with just one solace — solace of faith in God. Our countrymen lived in a state of "narcolepsy of a fond despair".

Altruism, boundless love, liberality of mind, clarity of conscience bestowed on him a will to live,

Life is moulded by living. He moulded his life along the path of service to and reverence to mother, and mother-land, and to the Family of Man, wherein he found each soul linked to another. To maintain that link in its optimum condition he acted with purest motives with non-violence in action and thought,

throughout, thus building up the character, that made Dadabhai a man of virtue undefiled and action untarnished by any alloy of mixed traits. At every stage in life Dadabhai had amalgamated the basic virtues, each one emphasised by one of the several religions :

"He incorporated in his life Zoroastrian principle of Asha — uprightness ; Karma-Marg of Gita ; five Vrats of Jainism ; Panchashila of Dharmapada ; moral elevation of Christianity and brotherhood of Koranic teaching — a delightful combination worthy of being consummated. No one has ever heard him utter a disrespectful word or seen him deviate from principles of truth and non-violence which he had assimilated in his life". (Jamnadas Udani)

Dadabhai had shone wherever he was — in school and college classes he had worked out a niche for himself. He could not go unnoticed anywhere from teacher at school and professor in college to a teacher of a community of millions, whose leadership he wielded with admirable sincerity of purpose.

As he could learn with ease he could teach with equal facility. Learning was his passion and teaching was his mission. He resisted all sorts of misunderstanding



A DUFF-ER IN INDIAN ARITHMETIC.

Professor D-ā-bh-i—Ha, you incorrigible Duff-er, look again at the figures and keep the sum well in mind !
THAT—is—the correct process to work out the problem !

and false beliefs and customs and to fight these evils he established in 1857 a society by the name of **Dharma-Marg** (A guide to the path of Religion)

To overcome total ignorance amongst women he opened the **first school for girls**. To enlighten people on issues vital to them he printed "**Rast-goftar**", a weekly newspaper and to make politics an understandable institution, he, in 1853 established the Bombay Presidency Asso-

ciation, through whose initiation passed all notable politicians of the time. Hence politics of that era was a struggle for truth and fairplay and not diplomacy of foul misdirections.

Dadabhai's entire life was trustworthy and that was accepted as such unreservedly by the Bank of England, which offered to Cama company any amount of loan (over Rs. 20,00,000 in those days) without security on the name and the

reputation of Dadabhai, who was its manager during the Crisis of American civil war, when many commercial concerns collapsed.

As child marriage was the custom of the time Dadabhoy was married at the age of four. Until he became an earning member of the family Dadabhai lived for his first twenty years in most modest circumstances. Simplicity was thrust on him in those early years but later when he had worked out a place for himself he could have bartered to live a life of struggle for self elevation and devotion to a Cause most dear to his heart. He was an Athornan, a true devout and pious Zoroastrian of lofty Character, sustained life long by vision of the divinity working out his evolution from within.

He was a Rathestar — a true warrior — a fighter for freedom, who fulfilled the prediction of Zafar (Urdu poet quoted in the preceding issue of Parsiana)

“Gaziome boo rahegi

Jab talak Imaan Ki

Jaake Londontak ladegi

Shamsheer Hindustanki”.

He was a businessman of highest integrity. He saved Cama Company of London from bankruptcy. Calculations and statistics were his strong points through which he enlightened India on the constant drain on its resources, which was at the root of our poverty.

We need him most now, as a teacher who would impart knowledge on our present day balance sheets of high targets weighed down by the pull of corruption. We want him today to lecture on Planning Commission to clarify how far or farfetched is our planning and where goes the Commission.

With his interests and attention universally distributed he had achieved a sort of Khordad (a completion) which he incorporated within himself and gave out to all from according to their deserts to according to their needs.

He is gone but with so much done by one man for so many he has attained Amartat (immortality) for “to live in the hearts of those whom we leave behind is not to die.”

We regret, Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji's name being mis-spelt as Dadabhoy Nowroji in July issue : Editor,

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RAHE-MAZDYASNI

A SYSTEM OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

by **DASTOOR KHURSHID DABOO**

Some years back Parsi parents took interest in their own religious subjects. took pains to learn and understand them, and transmitted their knowledge to their children and every school had classes for religious instructions. More-over competent lecturers went round from places to places and our institutions published useful pamphlets for free distribution or nominal payment —amongst them must be mentioned an excellent monthly named "**Cherag**" (now extinct since). In the second half of 19th Century Christian missionaries made a bold attempt at conversion of Parsis by delivering lectures directed to undermine Zoroastrianism. With great courage the community took up the challenge. Our madressas started intensive courses in Avesta, Pahlavi, Persian. The then old and reverend mobeds sahebs used their leisure in copying out ancient literature. In Dar-e-Mehers the senior mobeds had place of honour and the juniors sat by them as humble learners. The home atmosphere was one of purity and the head of the family supervised the morals and the behaviour of the entire household. **Learning was encouraged but morality was emphasised.** Honour was the most precious asset of a family and therefore the rich and the poor keenly guarded it. Dress was simple and consistent with decency in both sexes and there was dignified aloofness — if not complete bar —

between sexes and with members of other communities. **Life and religion were closely knit together and religion was learnt by actually living it.** As speech and behaviour had the same standard of purity the rising generation grew up to know religion in living. Monkeying of Europeans started deterioration. Swanking, spending, and loosening of moral ties set in as habits and under Christian influence many people began to look upon self-restraints as unbearable hindrance. The community took up cudgels against anti-Zoroastrian propaganda by christian priests (notably Rev. Dr. Wilson). However, the upper strata of society was enamoured of training in convents and a few of them stuck to their new pet. Then started political agitations in the country which in later years due to teachings of communistic theories materialism became rampant. The new national constitution declared India a secular state, i.e., one free from influences of any religion. **Education Departments started mimicking some half-baked Russian system and they were carried away by the idea of prohibiting religious instructions in schools.** Hence schools could not impart religious training. Some schools wanted it that way. So now since last so many years **education of children is limited to worldly matters only.** With preceding examples of non-cooperation and law breaking (as the then political

weapons) entire system of discipline is razed to the ground. Though the Parsis by and large were aloof from any type of hooliganism all the same the teachings and learning of religious environmental influences came to a stand-still. And now **the President of India (Dr. Radhakrishnan) himself openly declares that the mind of younger generation is disrupted and dissipated in the total absence of religious instructions.** Our own stable headed elders conform to the same opinion and several of our institutions are trying to impart religious training to our growing generation. Many parents are likewise anxious that their children should get religious training. Many Sunday classes and other facilities are opened out. To secure some sort of uniformity in training following suggestions are offered:

AVOID THESE ERRORS

(1) Note that children under 14 years of age cannot grasp the essential meaning in concepts like soul, salvation, loftiness of ceremonies. Child cannot feel interested in subjects which need much reasoning and many arguments for and against them. In their early years children are more for play and imagination so they would absorb most from pictures, songs and short (one-act) plays. Some such impressions will stick for life-long. Morals must be wound into short stories. Things of emotional appeal like hymns, old historical narrations would impart necessary training.

For all that mother's personal care goes a long way. **(Parental examples are the basis of moral development and**

character formation as has been definitely established by commonsensible experience and modern psychological research and practice) **child must learn common prayers by heart. Their meaning could be taught later.** Parents must not force on children books meant for grown-ups, as they cannot concentrate long or much. Even pictorial presentation of religious items they rapidly turn pages and set the book aside. Only things which could interest children could satisfy their hunger for knowledge. **Really speaking moral instruction is more important than religious instruction for children.** Appropriate pictures, short plays and more so playing a part in a play act like life-long grafts on their mind.

(2) Better that parents and teachers realise that by good behaviour on their **part much of moral training can be imparted silently; because imitation is natural to a child.** Children are known for learning bad ways, bad habits and bad language from environmental influences. **When children detect same faults in adults on which they get sermons all teaching is wasted. Good talk cannot instil good behaviour without good example.**

(3) No effort should be made to teach Iranian history as religion unless one can teach some moral out of the life of the luminary of that age. Mere historical data of time, place, wars and victories do no good.

(4) Good fruits of good deeds should be emphasised rather than punishment for sin and hell for fear.

(5) Word "study" must be properly understood. Even elders look upon this word to mean collection of facts good to know, but may not be worth knowing. Mere tabulation of Gahambars, names of rivers and mountains and kings and wars are only informations and not instructions. They do not help development of soul force or character. Teaching should be directed to latter end. We should emphasise on responsibility and duty to family, friends and society. That is training. Child will learn about need of religious belief by independent reading later on.

(6) Instead of long lectures in which children may have no interest question and answer sessions may be profitably introduced so that children's own particular difficulties can be directly explained in short, and Iman (Faith) which is the inward grasp of religious conviction could become firm through ready solution of children's personal confusions.

(7) The teacher or parent should not feel cock-sure and teachings should not be dogmatic; there should be room for differing points of view, which also always have some element of truth in them.

(8) Should any over-anxious adult inquire what book he or she should start with to arrive at the truth of our religion, never advise them to start with Yasht or Yasna; because these writings have specific significance different from their commonly understood meaning. Yashts contain hymns of the great deeds of Yazats and there may be some elements of forgi-

vable exaggeration —as there may be in epics like Ramayana.

In Yazashne "Yazmaide" (I worship you with reverence) repeatedly occurs. In it there may well be the worship 𐬵𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎 of the Yazats but when modern generation is in haste for fundamental principles it finds no interest in such statements. Then they ask what is the element of religions in it? One should not forget that religious writings of all religions do contain parts of historical narrations. But education of modern generation is biased in favour of science and philosophy and seeks proofs, so our teachings should be directed towards such quests.

(9) All important works of the past are already translated yet ancient technical terms are left intact and will remain so. Even our Pahlvi writers have adopted Avestan words in their originals. In any case we cannot fully understand the Idioms of those periods; hence the right path is to be liberal and look upon with respect different interpretations and accept our ancient writings with above proviso; instead of looking upon any particular writing or work as authoritative and final. Such attitude is wasteful. On the contrary Late Mr. K. R. Cama encouraged everybody to suggest new angles of visions and ideas. Still the method of choice for educational institutions should always be one of set versions and opinions to dissuade the student world from needlessly developing controversial trends.



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BOOK REVIEW

WHO ARE THE PARSIS?

by SOHRAB K. H. KATRAK

K.S., F.R.G.S., J.P., S.B., ST. J. Ex-Mayor of Karachi
(Pakistan Herald Press-Karachi pp. 310-Price Rs. 15)

This is just one much awaited publication the Parsis needed. It covers the entire ground ranging from pre-historic and legendary events to the recent present almost up-to-date. Every page is full of material lucidly and comprehensively treated so that events, incidents and memorable occurrences all flow into our time and fill it with a feeling of our reading time usefully and enjoyably spent. The author has devoted to it his labour of love. Statements are not left to chance but important authors are quoted for confirmation. Era after era are treated in their historical succession in sufficient details to make each one impress its own place in the chain of events.

The coming of the Prophet, Philosophy of the Gathas and the interpretations of Mithraism, which singly and jointly moulded the mind of the Zoroastrians of that age and resulted in the building up of an Empire by the Achaemenian Dynasty upto Khusrow Parvez, the magnificent sovereign of the Sassanian period, slowly tapering down to complete fall of Iranian Empire, are subjects covered pithily but impressively.

From the Exodus to the position of the Parsis in British India right upto the partition and formation of Pakistan are the periods familiar to elders of the day and read like revival of memory but with many details not known upto now. Industrialists, Politicians, Social workers, men of ranks in public and defence services and the humble who have risen and made their mark are all cited as worthy products of our religious training and way of life.

Zoroastrian Religion — Its Rites, Customs and ceremonies are treated and explained in orthodox reverence and its stalwart Athornans, Samsh-ul-ulma Ervad Dr. Sir Jivanji Mody and Samsh-ul-Ulma Dastoor Dr. Manekji Dhalla of revered memories are mentioned as our recent great teachers. The Revolt of the Parsi youth against established practices and customs is the chapter on latest danger arising out of international and intercommunal contacts

which daily widen the gap between the elders and the youth. This chapter is an eye-opener. We strongly recommend the book. It is available from the author — Katrak Villa, 245, Bonus Road, Karachi-4.

A RUSSIAN WAR SONG

by

(THE BOSTON POET)

We're coming, Alexandrovitch at least a million more,
From Kanineshaeja's bay and Obskalagoubas's shore,
From Karakouski's frozen wild, from Tysmkai's plain.
We're marching, Alexander, with all our might and main.
From Gatmonsckino's forest, from Tschernorbeskoi's vale,
From Wassiagourbsk's blooming fields, from Olyinskia's dale,
From Kakamajosa's villages, from Meidouscharaki's isle,
We're coming Alexander, the weary rank and file.
We're on to Berg-el-Murghab, and Penjschidyeh we seek,
And we're headed by some generals whose names no tongue
can speak.

From provinces and villages whose names before the eye
Look like a heap of consonants shovelled into "pi"
We, arolows and-öffskies-effs and-offs and-vitches
For Holy Church and Pious Czar will die in Herat's ditches.

from PARSI PUNCH 1885.

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