A HISTORY
OF
ZOROASTRIANISM

BY

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VOLUME ONE
THE EARLY PERIOD

LEIDEN/KÖLN
E. J. BRILL
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Dedicated
(according to the order of our meeting)
to those of my Zoroastrian friends to whom
this history of their faith owes most
Arbab Jamshed Sorush Sorushian of Kerman
Agha Rustam Noshirvan Belivani of Sharijabad
Dastur Khodadad Shehriar Neryosangi of Yazd
Ervad Dr. Firoze Meherji Kotwal of Navsari
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FOREWORD

The serious study of Zoroastrianism in the West is scarcely two hundred years old, for it is founded on the interpretation of the Zoroastrian holy books, called collectively the Avesta, which remained unknown outside the community itself until the late 18th century. From the days of ancient Greece Zoroaster’s own name had been familiar to the learned as that of a fabled Eastern sage; and when the Avesta came at last into scholars’ hands, they sought eagerly in it for teachings which would justify this fame. At the time European men of letters acknowledged the twofold authority of Christianity and Reason, that of the former being as yet unchallenged by scientific advance; and Zoroaster’s faith, since it had been propounded by one of the great teachers of mankind, was expected to be of a kind which a rational Christian could approve. There was dismay when its scriptures showed it to be on the contrary in many respects remote and strange. For one thing, it was a faith which acknowledged, under God, many lesser divine beings, who were reverenced with a wealth of complex rituals and observances. Christianity and acquaintance with Greek mythology had combined to create in Europe a conviction that polytheism belonged to the childlike past of the human race, having been superseded for all advanced peoples by monotheism. Protestant Christianity, moreover (in which faith most Western interpreters of Zoroastrianism were reared), had no high regard for ritualism, even in the worship of a single God. To accept Zoroastrianism as it was, and to try to understand Zoroaster’s teachings with the help of the living tradition, proved accordingly too much for the West; and a solution to the resulting dilemma was eventually found, in the middle of the 19th century, by the brilliant philologist Martin Haug. By painstaking study he isolated the Gāthās (a group of seventeen ancient hymns) as the only part of the Avesta which could be regarded as the direct utterance of Zoroaster; and he then proceeded, in all sincerity, to interpret these archaic and very difficult texts (concerning whose translation no two scholars to this day agree) independently from the actual beliefs and practices of Zoroaster’s followers, whose forbears, he thought, must have early corrupted their prophet’s teachings. Struggling as a pioneer with these baffling hymns, Haug managed to understand Zoroaster to have preached a strict monotheism—stricter even than that of the Hebrew prophets—rejecting while he did so all rituals of sacrifice and worship, apart from prayer. He assumed, that is, that the
The difficulty of finding common ground led to ever-new interpretations being propounded in both Europe and India, some of which seem strangely remote from the realities of Zoroastrian scripture or tradition. In general Western scholarship has tended, naturally enough, to concern itself with texts rather than with practice, and with doctrine and mythology rather than with the devotional life of the faith; and these limitations have made it all the easier for free rein to be given to fantasy.

While theories about Zoroastrianism have multiplied in the present century, so too has actual knowledge of the religion in all its aspects, through the work of philologists, historians, archaeologists and numismatists, and above all that of Zoroastrian scholars themselves, who, overcoming a habit of reticence engrained by centuries of persecution, have described their own ceremonies and customs, and have published many previously-unknown secondary texts, thus sharing their religious heritage with the outside world. It has not always been easy, however, for Western scholars to use these books, particularly those which expound rituals, since these assume both basic knowledge and also religious attitudes unfamiliar to the non-Zoroastrian. Some have, therefore, remained virtually unstudied, and early misconceptions have thus managed to persist despite new sources of knowledge.

The only way to gain perspective for assessing recent developments in Zoroastrianism, and at the same time to find means of marshalling the mass of evidence now available for earlier epochs, seemed to be to attempt the writing of a continuous history of the faith, from the time of the prophet to the present day, without leaving (as has been customary) great gaps over which imagination can all too freely leap, such as the 500 years of Parthian rule in Iran, or the first 1,000 years of Zoroastrianism after the coming of Islam. The difficulties in the way of carrying out such a task are plainly formidable, because of the deficiency of the sources; but enough material has by now accumulated for it to seem no longer impossible. In undertaking it the writer started from the premise that Zoroaster’s message is more likely to have been understood by his own disciples and followers than by students from a totally different culture and religious heritage, who first came to struggle with it, purely intellectually, millennia after he had preached. Accordingly throughout this work considerable reliance has been placed on the Zoroastrian tradition, which can be shown to have been remarkably strong and consistent at all known periods down to the time of European impact in the mid-19th century.

It was originally intended to preface the present volume with a brief survey of the various interpretations of Zoroastrianism advanced in
recent decades; but it became plain that this could not be usefully done until earlier developments had been traced. This survey will accordingly be set instead as an appendix to the last volume. Naturally incidental references to the views of individual scholars are made throughout the work.

A minor difficulty in attempting a history of Zoroastrianism lies in the transcribing of proper names and technical terms, since the forms of these vary in the different languages concerned, and at different times and places. For the ancient period one has Avestan and Old Persian, to be followed by Parthian and Middle Persian; and in modern times the speech of the Parsi and Irani communities has again diverged. In the present volume Avestan and Middle Persian (Pahlavi) forms have in general been preferred, since the Zoroastrian texts themselves are preserved in those two languages; but even so the nature of the evidence makes it impossible to avoid some mixing of Avestan and Middle Persian terms. In the transcriptions, particular scholarly usages have been avoided where these could be confusing in a general work, notably the rendering of the voiceless velar fricative (i.e. the final sound in Scottish "loch") by "x". This sound is here represented instead by "kh" (except rarely where whole passages of Avestan or Pahlavi have been transcribed). The practice of using "z" for the voiceless palatal fricative seems, however, simple and unambiguous, and has been adopted except initially, since there are several proper and place names beginning with this sound (such as Shapur, Shiraz) which are too well-known not to look odd if so spelt. The signs "\(\ddot{e}\)" and "\(\ddot{z}\)" (in preference to "\(\chi\)" and "\(\z\)"") have similarly been retained. The transcriptions "s" for a short indefinite Avestan vowel, and "y" for a modified nasal will not, it is hoped, trouble the general reader.

A far greater problem is presented by the nature of the sources. The Zoroastrian priests were long reluctant to use the alien art of writing to record their sacred texts, and no religious works exist whose written form can be attributed to earlier than the 3rd century A.C. Most of what was written down then and thereafter contains matter which is evidently immeasurably older; and the difficulty is to decide which are the ancient elements in each individual work, and to what epoch they can properly be assigned. It has been usual to deal with this problem by treating all Pahlavi books as products in toto of the Sasanian period; but this results in strange anomalies, obliging one, for instance, to expound the immensely archaic cosmology upon which Zoroaster's own teachings rest as if it were a creation of that relatively modern and sophisticated age. Accordingly a different course has been taken in the present work, and comparatively late sources have been drawn on when necessary, with due caveats, to illustrate what appear to have been the beliefs of prehistoric times.

In the writing of this first volume (and indeed of the history as a whole) I am deeply indebted for help and information, most generously given, to those of my Zoroastrian friends to whom it is dedicated. It is ruefully said nowadays by Zoroastrians themselves that where three of them are gathered together, there will be three different interpretations of their faith; and I cannot therefore expect that the conclusions drawn here should win their assent. I can only hope that they will be recognizable as part of an honest attempt to approach the truth. I further owe a particular debt to my friend Dr. M. I. Scott of the University Library, Cambridge, for her continual help in obtaining books and references, and even more for illuminating discussions of many perplexing points. Professor Paul Thiene has most kindly spared time for correspondence, and has thereby furnished me with help even beyond what I have derived from his penetrating printed works. I owe too a considerable debt to my friend Dr. Ilya Gershevitch, who by fiercely disagreeing with some of my conclusions has provided a needful spur to further reflection and research. I have also enjoyed discussions of archaeological matters with my learned colleague Dr. A. D. H. Bivar, and have had much help from him, and from his former student, Dr. Shapur Shahbazi, now Director of the Institute for Achaemenid Research at Persepolis.

Scholars who have earned my warm gratitude by most kindly sending me references, articles in typescript, rare books or xeroxes relevant to the present volume are Professor Sir Harold Bailey, Professor I. M. Diakonov, Professor J. Duchesne-Guillaumin, Mr. Gordon Wason, Professor Jacob Neusner, Professor R. E. Emmerick, Professor Martin Schwartz, the late Dr. P. K. Anklesaria, Dr. A. Tafazzoli, Miss Helen Potamianos and Mr. Bela Broganski. I owe particular thanks to Mr. J. R. Hinnells for kindly reading proofs of this volume; and to Professor B. Spuler and the house of Brill for the forbearance which they have shown in face of the slow, remorseless growth of this history from the 30 pages originally allotted to Zoroastrianism in the Handbuch der Orientalistik to the planned four volumes of the present work.
ABBREVIATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCES

Where an editor’s or translator’s name follows in brackets, see under this in the select bibliography:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Ātaš Niyāyeḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVN</td>
<td>Ardāya Virāz Nāmag (Jamaspījī Asa-Haag)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Dādestān i dinīg (T. D. Anklesaria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dk.</td>
<td>Dinḵard (P. B. and D. P. Sanjana, D. M. Madan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-Bd.</td>
<td>The Greater (or Iranian) Bundahišn (T. D. Anklesaria, B. T. Anklesaria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ind. Bd.</td>
<td>The Indian Bundahišn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k½</td>
<td>Kaunjiṭaka-Brāhmaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kṣŚ</td>
<td>Kādystone-samhitā</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mbh.</td>
<td>Mahābhārata</td>
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<tr>
<td>MKh.</td>
<td>Mēnōg i Khurad (E. W. West)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nir.</td>
<td>Nirangestān (D. P. Sanjana, S. J. Bulsara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ny.</td>
<td>Niyāyeḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahl. Riv. Ādurfarbag</td>
<td>The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Ādurfarbag (B. T. Anklesaria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahl. Riv. Dd.</td>
<td>The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān i dinīg (B. N. Dhabhar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahl. Riv. Farnbag-Srōš</td>
<td>The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Farnbag-Srōš (B. T. Anklesaria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riv.</td>
<td>The Persian Rivāyats (M. R. Unvala, B. N. Dhabhar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RV</td>
<td>Rīgveda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saddar Bd.</td>
<td>Saddar Bundahišn (B. N. Dhabhar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sāk</td>
<td>Śāyest nē-šāyest (J. C. Tavadiā, F. M. Kotwal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vd.</td>
<td>Vindelīd</td>
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<td>Vr.</td>
<td>Visperad</td>
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<tr>
<td>VS</td>
<td>Vājasaneyasamhitā</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Yaśna</td>
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<tr>
<td>YHapt.</td>
<td>Yaśna Haptaŋhāti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yt.</td>
<td>Yašt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zādspram</td>
<td>Vizdmarshā i Zādspram (B. T. Anklesaria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZVt.</td>
<td>Zand i Vahman Yašt (B. T. Anklesaria)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZKH.A</td>
<td>Zand i Khodag Avestā (B. N. Dhabhar)</td>
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JOURNALS AND OTHER COMPOSITE WORKS

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>AION</td>
<td>Annali dell’ Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKGW zu Göttingen</td>
<td>Akademie der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMI</td>
<td>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAW</td>
<td>Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARW</td>
<td>Archiv für Religionswissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSO(AJS)</td>
<td>Bulletin of the School of Oriental (and African) Studies, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERE</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. J. Hastings, 13 vols., Edinburgh 1908-1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIP</td>
<td>Grundriss der iranischen Philologie, herausgegeben von W. Geiger und E. Kuhn, 2 vols., Strassburg 1895-1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>Indogermanische Forschungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIJ</td>
<td>Indo-Iranian Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JĀ</td>
<td>Journal asiatique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAO S</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBIRAS</td>
<td>Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS

JCOI  Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute
JNES  Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS  Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
KZ  Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der Indogermanischen Sprachen, begründet von A. Kuhn
MO  Le Monde orientale
MSS  Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft
OLZ  Orientalische Literaturzeitung
RHR  Revue de l'histoire des religions
SBE  The Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller
SPAW  Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
TIFS  Transactions of the Philological Society, London
WZKM  Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
WZKSO  Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens
ZDMG  Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft

OTHER SECONDARY WORKS

For abbreviated titles of books see under the author's or editor's name in the select bibliography at the end of the volume. Abbreviations of authors' and editors' names are also given there.

NOTE

In passages translated from Avestan or Pahlavi an asterisk before a word indicates uncertainty about either its reading or its rendering. With single words an asterisk simply marks a postulated form.
CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL

No sound tradition exists about the date of Zoroaster;¹ but the great Iranian prophet cannot be assigned to a time before his people acquired their separate identity in parting from their close cousins, the Indians,² and forging their own distinctive languages and culture. For thousands of years, it seems, the Indo-Iranians lived together as nomads on the broad Asian steppes, stretching from the lower Volga eastward to the boundary of Kazakhstan. There they herded long-horned cattle on foot, moving slowly between pastures; and there they gradually evolved a common culture of such strength that elements persisted as a shared heritage long after the two peoples had divided and gone their separate ways. It is generally held that they began to drift apart during the third millennium B.C.; and it is thought that the composition of the oldest Indian work, the Rigveda, should be set as beginning some time around 1700 B.C.³ The language of its hymns, in their surviving form, is very close to that of the Gāthās, the hymns of Zoroaster; and not only the outward form of the prophet's works, but also strikingly archaic elements in their content, make it reasonable to suppose that he himself cannot have lived later than about 1000 B.C.⁴ He may in fact have flourished some time earlier. The linguistic evidence shows, moreover, that his home must have been among the Iranians of the north-east; and it is probable that

¹ The two dates which exist, that of 6000 years before Plato (preserved by the Greeks) and that of 258 years before Alexander (to be found in the late Zoroastrian tradition of Sassanian times) both appear to have been calculated from alien data. On these see further p. 286 n. 38 and in Vol. II.
² In the following pages the term “Indian” is used, for simplicity's sake, for the Indo-European people who later invaded the Indian sub-continent, and who in other contexts are referred to as “Indo-Aryans”, to distinguish them from the indigenous peoples of India.
⁴ That the date of Zoroaster was somewhere between 1000 and 900 B.C., or perhaps even earlier, was formerly the opinion of most Western scholars, including E. Meyer, F. C. Andreas, C. Clemen, C. Barholomae, B. Geiger, F. Windsichsmann, A. B. Keith, J. Charpentier, C. P. Tiele and R. Kent. The support given to the date of “258 years before Alexander” in recent decades is largely due to the powerful advocacy of A. Meillet, E. Herzfeld, S. H. Taqizadeh and W. B. Henning; but the authenticity of this date has latterly been strongly challenged again, see further in Ch. 7, below.
his own people (known as the "Avestan people" from the name of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta) settled eventually in Khwarezmia, the land along the lower course of the Oxus.5 Up to the present century little was known of the prehistory of this area, or of the surrounding ancient kingdoms (Bactria, Sogdia and Ferghana to the south-east and east, Parthia and Margiana to the south). All these now form part of Soviet Central Asia, being divided among the territories of the Uzbek, Tajik, Turkmen and Kirghiz republics; and during this century much excavation has been carried out in the region by Soviet archaeologists, through which knowledge has been gained of its remote past.6

As for the Indo-Iranians in their nomadic stage, they have been identified as one of the bearers of the Andronovo culture, which in the 2nd millennium B.C. was distinguished by fine tool- and weapon-making in bronze.7 (The great mace wielded by the Iranian Mithra appears from its fixed poetic description to have been fashioned of this metal.)8 A slender shaft of light has been thrown on their society by the study of certain legalistic Vedic and Avestan texts,9 which show that the Indians and Iranians had a common tradition not only of kingship but of high kings, and that the high king's rule was not arbitrary, but was bounded to some extent by undertakings entered into with his vassals, so that he acknowledged obligations as well as exercising rule. This pattern of society appears to have become reflected in that of the gods, for its influence has been traced in the development of beliefs in the asuras of the Indo-Iranian

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5 This country first became known to the West through the Greeks, and various other forms of its name are in use, e.g. Choresm, Choresmas, Khorasmia, Khwarezm. In Old Persian it appears as [Hi]vaxram. On the various grounds for linking the prophet's people with this area see J. Marquet, Erdkbrn nach der documentographie des Ps. Moses Xwemait, AKGW zu Géttingen, Berlin 1901, 155-6; A. Christensen, Acta Orientalia IV, 1925, 82 with n. 1 (who cites also F. C. Andreas); E. Herzfeld, AMI I, 1920/1930, 104 n. 2, II, 1939, 47; H. W. Bailey, BSOS VI, 1932, 955-3; E. Benveniste, BSOS VII, 1934, 268-72; W. B. Henning, Zoroaster, historian or witch-doctor?, Neutral Press Lectures 1949, Oxford 1951, 44-5.


7 The great difficulties in definitely identifying a people with a culture known only from material remains makes this arguable, however. See, contra, K. Jottman, Zur Wanderrnungs-geschichte der Iraner, Vienna 1925.


9 See H. Lüders, Eine artische Ausschmierung der See-Volksbruch, SPAW, Phil. hist. kl., 1917.

10 It may also be mirrored in one of the oldest of the Avestan hymns, the Mithra Yasht, where the expression vispa nam daitha nam daithu-paiat- "king of many countries" occurs, as well as daithuosat- "command of countries, empire", and daithu nam rata "council of the first men of countries", possibly that is, of tribal chiefs or vassal kings.11 That with power themselves should have accepted the restraints of pact and bond seems in accord with the leading philosophical concept of the Indo-Iranians, that of fris (Avestan asas),12 by which was understood a principle of order and rightness that governed the natural world (causing the sun to rise and set and the seasons to change), and also directed human society, so that to be happy in life and death men must submit to its workings, and regulate their own lives with sembliness. The social pattern thus divined for the Indo-Iranians is in harmony with what is known of later nomads of the steppes, such as the Mongols, among whom likewise there existed strong traditions of mutual loyalty and obligation, as well as power in the hands of great chiefs. In the uncertain conditions of a wandering life good leadership is necessary for the well-being of family, tribe and people; and so one has the development of "nomad feudalism", with a hierarchy mounting up to a position of very considerable power for its head. As has been pointed out,13 the ultimate conquests by Indians and Iranians of the lands where they now live would hardly have been possible without such leaders, as in the case of the great nomad invasions of historic times.

Another aspect of Indo-Iranian society in its pastoral period was that it was divided broadly into three groups.14 In Zoroaster's hymns these were called by the following terms: nār, literally "man", that is, the fighting man or warrior; zaotar-"priest", either "he who makes the offerings" or
he who invokes"; and vāsār "pasturerm the herdsman who tended the cattle in their grazing grounds (vāstra-). In the later Avesta other terms occur also. Thus there is a general term for a priest, ādhāravan, āthaūrvan (Skt. āthaúrvan), an Indo-Iranian word of doubtful etymology; and the herdsman is commonly called vāstyrō, fšṣvārnt ("cattle")-fattening pasturerm and is also termed khōṣār "good-pasturerm." The warrior is usually known as rathašār "chariot rider," a term evolved evidently after the Iranians had adopted the war-chariot instead of fighting on foot. This development is held to have taken place during the second millennium B.C.; and so popular did the chariot become that in time most of the gods of the Indians and Iranians came to be conceived as driving in one. Zoroaster himself seems to have made use of a wheeled vehicle in his journeys; but the vocabulary of his poetry still reflects an older state of affairs, when probably only the weak and old travelled in heavy ox-drawn carts, and men would have made their way, and fought, on foot. The riding of horses seems to have come even later, probably not until well into the first millennium B.C., and is reflected in yet another Younger Avestan word for warrior: bāšār "horseman." The dog must earlier have been therefore an invaluable ally of the nomad herdsman, in rounding up and protecting the grazing herds; and it was evidently in those far-off days that cow and dog together assumed their great importance in the social and also religious life of the Indo-Iranians, an importance which in Zoroastrianism they never lost.

The division of society into three classes or estates is found with other pastoral peoples of old, such as the ancient Irish, and is indeed held by some to have been a feature of Indo-European society. The theory was long sustained in Iran and India; but plainly even in their nomadic days the Indo-Iranians did not in fact have so simple a social structure that it could be limited to only three groups, rigidly defined by occupation. The calling of the smith, for example, is an old one, and the finely-wrought products of the later Bronze Age are evidently the work of skilled craftsmen. Another group of craftsmen with an Indo-European heritage were the minstrels, and remnants of an Indo-Iranian tradition of heroic poetry survive in the literatures of both Iran and India. There must have been lyric and elegiac poetry also, and occasional verses, the work of trained professional bards; and religious and learned poetry was cultivated by priests. Theirs was the learned class, but their learning was acquired and transmitted orally, for the Indo-Iranians had no knowledge of writing, nor did they find this art among the peoples whom they first conquered, and it remained unknown to them down to historic times; and even after they had acquired it, they did not choose to adapt it to religious purposes until many more centuries had passed.

There is no reason to suppose that in those early days each man was strictly bound to the calling of his fathers. The Iranians have never had a rigid caste system such as that which developed in post-Vedic India, and there was always an element, however slight, of mobility in their society. Yet naturally the usual course would have been for a boy to follow his father's occupation, which he would have been set to learn at a very early age. Herodotus records that among the Persians of the 5th century B.C. it was usual for boys of the noble or "warrior" class to begin their training at the age of five, by learning to ride and shoot and tell the truth; and in both India and Iran the tradition survived into the 20th century that priests' sons were apprenticed to their exacting calling at about the age of seven. Zoroaster himself, among the founders of great religions, was a priest by profession, and he must have been trained therefore from infancy in the practices and doctrines of the ancient faith which he was inspired to reform.

15 Ir. zaadār, Ved. hoty probably both derive from an Indo-Iranian *hāstār in which two meanings appear to have coalesced, from agent nouns of two different verbs meaning to "pour" and "call"; see Bartholomae, Altorianeisches Wörterbuch, 1961, 25; E. F. Gellner in Indo-Iranian Studies presented to D. P. Sanjana, 2nd series, 1952, 277 F.; Gorshovich, AHN, 277.
16 The link formerly proposed with Av. āter "fire" is now generally rejected on philological grounds. See S. Wikander, Feuerepriester in Kleinasien und Iran, Lund 1940, 12-14.
17 See Benveniste, JÄ 1932, 123-4; khōṣār (ku.všātār).
19 See Yassa 51:12 (if the assumption is right, see Bartholomae, Aris, WB. 1417, that vāsār is dual for "two draught-animals").
20 The Scythians or Sakas seem to have been the first fully-mounted nomads of the steppes.
21 See Benveniste, loc. cit.; Bartholomae, Grundriss der irischenen Philologie, 1 171, § 293 (bāšār < khašār-).
Among priests of the Indo-Iranian period, as in later times, there were evidently different vocations; but it is likely that there was a basic training in which they all shared. The fact that there are common elements in the rituals of Zoroastrians and Brahmans shows that there is an old tradition behind these, transmitted from generation to generation. In addition to mastering such rituals, a priest would have had to know sacred words to accompany them, as well as hymns or songs of praise to please the gods when they came, duly summoned, to the offerings. For hundreds of years, among Brahmans and Zoroastrians, the words of all prayers and hymns have been fixed, to be memorised and repeated exactly; but formerly there was evidently both learning by heart, whereby the traditions of the sacred literature were preserved, and freedom to compose afresh, although within its established conventions. Three main categories of formal religious utterance are known. Firstly there was the mantra, Av. maṭhra. This word comes, it seems, from the base man “think”, and has been defined as formulated meditation, the utterance which was the “instrument of thought”. The mantra or maṭhra accompanied rituals; and of old an inspired priest would compose such utterances. In the Vedic idiom he was mantrakha, a “mantra-maker”, one who enunciated the mantra “well-fashioned from the heart” (hrā ā sūtaṭṣam), which others would remember and repeat after him. (The Vedic seer received his vision with or in his heart, hrā or hrā, and a phrase in the Gāthās, zorėdācā manarēdācā “by heart and thought”, shows that the same was true for the ancient Iranians, the heart being regarded as the seat of manas “thought”.) Vedic has also an adjective mantrin “knowing the mantras”, and Zoroaster repeatedly uses an Iranian equivalent, maṭhravan, of himself. In general, this seems, priestly utterances were regarded as inspired in the strictest sense, being revealed or revealing themselves, for such inspiration was held to come either from a deity or from a faculty within the priest himself.

A second category of composition, the song of praise, has been compared with the panegyrical uttered by a minstrel to please a worldly master, for in the same way the hymn was intended to please the god and induce him to show favour to his worshippers. In order to be effective praises of the divinity and descriptions of his former deeds and bounties needed, how-

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25 See Thieme, ZDMG, 107, 69.
26 RV 2.35, 2, cf. 1.97, 4, both cited by Thieme, loc. cit.
28 For references see Bartholomae, Air, Wh. 1170.
a priest could obtain the richest rewards by becoming a purohita or "chaplain" to a king.38 This system, whereby most members of the priesthood were attached to individual families, is common still to the Zoroastrians and Brahmins, and has its origins no doubt in the Indo-Iranian era. It was indeed a system admirably suited in the remote past to nomadic peoples who had, it appears, no established cult-centres to be served by priests, but who performed their sacred rituals wherever they found themselves. Doubtless in prehistoric as in later times many domestic observances (such as tending the hearth-fire and making offerings to the ancestral spirits) were performed by the laity in their own homes; but for major rituals priests with their greater knowledge must always have been needed. The common Indo-Iranian tradition shows that, in accordance with the individualism of the steppe-dweller, these rituals were invariably performed at the command of a single person, from whom the priest received his recompense. (No system of regular stipends has evolved even yet among Brahmins or Zoroastrians.) This person was called in Sanskrit the yajamāna, the one who ordained the sacrifice—a term subsequently adopted as appropriate by the Persians in their Gujarati form of yajmān or yajmīn; in later Zoroastrian idiom he is the one who gives the "command" (frānāyish) for the ceremony.39 Even if the whole community were concerned, as in times of war or famine, still the rituals were performed on the authority of an individual, in such cases the prince or local leader.

In the distant nomadic days it must be supposed that each Iranian group had usually its own priestly families and individual priests; but among the Medes it is reported that one of their six tribes, called by the Greeks the "Magoi",38 supplied priests for all the rest.37 There is no knowing how old was this custom, first reported from the 5th century B.C.; but in any case, although the "Magi" later played so large a part in Zoroastrianism, their name appears to be absent from the Avesta itself, for it has been shown that in all probability Yav. maghu.bah means, not "hostile to the Magus" (as used to be thought), but rather "hostile to a member of the tribe".38 It may be, however, that Avestan maghu and Medean magu were the same word in origin, a common Iranian term for "member of the tribe" having developed among the Medes the special sense of "member of the (priestly) tribe", hence a priest.39 It is thus in the west of Iran that the principle of a hereditary priesthood, exclusive in character, is first encountered. Among the Avestan people, as in Vedic India,40 it seems that the priestly class had less rigid barriers; for Zoroaster himself, although a zaotar, married into a "warrior" family, and gave one of his daughters in marriage in the same way. (Similarly in living Zoroastrianism priests have intermarried with the laity: but the right to become a priest descends strictly from father to son. It cannot be transmitted through a priest's daughter to his grandchildren.)

Matters are complicated with regard to the ancient priesthood by the question of the position and character of the kavi. In Vedic India the kavi was a mantic poet, a wise man, a seer. The word was used of men and gods, of Soma and the soma-priest; for the drinking of soma stimulated the shaping of kāvya. "A kāvya is not merely an 'inspired utterance', but often a 'magically potent spell'."41 In Iran the term kavi and its Middle Iranian derivatives of kav, kav, appear in various usages. In the Gāhās Zoroaster speaks harshly of the kavis who are hostile to his teachings; but his patron Vīštāpa, the ruler who finally accepted his doctrines, bore the title of kavi, and so, according to tradition, did his ancestors before him. In the Manichaean scriptures composed in Middle Iranian (which in their vocabulary owe much to Zoroastrianism) kav is used of gods and men, in the latter case in the sense of "giant". In Zoroastrian tradition, except in one particular formula of exegesis, kav means "king", evidently because Kavi Vīštāpa and his forbears, the "kavis" par excellence, were princely rulers.42 Presumably the gift of prophecy, of mantic poetry, was hereditary in their family; but whether the Iranian kavi was ever also a priest, or whether as in Israel mantic prophecy was freely cultivated by men outside the priesthood, there seems no means of knowing. It is perhaps significant, however, that Zoroaster, who was both priest and prophet, appears to have regarded the kavis as being of a different order, and described himself as māthran, one who revealed māthrās rather than kāvya. What-

38 Chadwick, Growth II, 610.
40 V. Oitramere, Le rôle du yajamana dans le sacrifice bramanique, Louvain 1903.
42 Benveniste, op. cit., 18-19; and on the possible etymology of the word ibid., 19-20. In the 5th century B.C. not all "Magoi" were priests.
43 On royal "priests" and Brahman "warriors" see Lommel in Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 19.
44 Chadwick, Growth II, 612, 613.
46 Christensen, Les Rayandies, Copenhagen 1932, followed the then accepted interpretation of Gathic kavi simply as "prince, ruler"; as did Lommel, Y affiliation, 171-2. Against this see R. Baer, Ascola, Copenhagen 1954, 207; Gershevitch, AHM 185-6. On the Indian term kavi see J. Gonda, The vision of the Vedic poets, The Hague 1963.
ever the precise definition of their name, it seems probable that the kavis who set themselves against Zoroaster did so as “wise men” who had their own apprehensions of the divine, and were not ready to accept his new and highly personal revelation.

With the hostile kavi Zoroaster linked the karapan and usij. The latter, mentioned only once (Y.44.20), can be identified with the Vedic usij. In the Vedas too he is rarely referred to, but like the kavi he appears to have been a “wise man”, and the two terms seem to be used sometimes interchangeably.44 The karapan has no Vedic equivalent; but he is spoken of several times in the Gāthās, and in the later and “Younger” Avesta he appears together with the kavi in a stereotyped formula of execution, which enumerates the foes of Zoroastrianism. He represents there, it is thought, the priest of the daēvic cult. The word has been connected with Sanskrit kalpa “ritual”, with the deduction that karapan meant a ritual priest, one engaged in ceremonies;44 but latterly it has been suggested45 that the word should rather be associated with a Khwarezmian verb karb- “moan, mumble” (Sk. kṛp-), in which case one might suppose it to have been used pejoratively by Zoroaster for the ordinary conservatively-minded priest, repeating or “mumbling” liturgies and prayers without much thought for their meaning. By either interpretation the karapans are taken to be working priests, whereas the kavis and usijś had, it appears, mantric powers of wisdom and prophecy. Naturally opponents of Zoroaster’s new teachings were to be expected among all orders of religiously-minded men.

Nothing is known of the organisation of priestly learning; but evidently there were schools of various kinds, as well as instruction handed down within families. In Younger Avestan the word aethrapati “master of aethra” appears, which, although its etymology and exact meaning are uncertain,46 seems to describe an instructor of priests, a teacher, his pupil or disciple being called aethrya. Since these two terms occur in what appears to be an ancient part of the hymn to Mithra, they probably belonged to the pagan Iranian world. In its later forms of ērdad, ērdad, ērved the word aethrapati has a continuous history in Zoroastrianism. With the aethrapati is named once the hamidhpati (Yt.13.105), who also apparently was an instructor.47

44 See M. Haag, Essays on the sacred language, writings and religion of the Persians, 3rd ed., London 1884, 289; Bartholomae, Air. WB. 406.
45 See Haag, op. cit., 289-90; Bartholomae, Air. WB. 405.
46 See Henning, Zoroaster, 45.
47 Bailey, BSOAS XX, 1957, 42-3, postulates a base ay- “pronounce solemnly, instruct”, hence aethra “instruction”, aethrya “one being instructed”.
48 Yt.13.105. Bailey, art. cit., 43, seeks to derive this word too from ay- “instruct”, with preverb ham.

The various Old Iranian words for priest and prophet suggest a complex pattern of religious life and experience in pagan Iran; but the need to perform the basic rituals and acts of worship must have brought seer and working priest together in religious community, together with members of the other two classes. The Indo-Iranian custom was evidently that at maturity each man underwent a ceremony at which he was invested with a sacred cord which he always wore thereafter (maturity being reckoned at 15 years of age). As an initiate he was then able to take his part in corporate acts of worship, and had also the duty to fulfill the regular religious obligations which devolved on all men, priest or lay.

As well as being divided theoretically into three classes, Iranian society had a further fourfold grouping by kinship and association. There was the household or agnostic family group (which is referred to in the Gāthās as khvaētu “family”, in the Younger Avesta as nmāna “house”); the settlement or village (GĀv. varzāna, YĀv. vēs); the tribal area or tribe (GĀv. soīθra “region, territorial unit”, YĀv. santu “tribe”); and finally the country or association in the widest sense (dahyu).48 In the nomadic period this last term presumably meant the grazing lands belonging by customary right to a group of tribes. In settled times it indicated the area occupied by people who acknowledged the same ruler. (Probably such an area, although sometimes extensive, might also be relatively small, a single river-valley or mountain-locked plain). At the head of each of these four social groups was its “lord”, its raru or -pati. In the Younger Avesta the terms are nmānōpaiti, vispātī, zantupaiti, and daštupaiti (older *dahyupaiti). There is nothing to suggest a parallel priestly hierarchy, except in so far as the priest of the daštupaiti (the purohitā of Vedic idioms49) would naturally be a man of greater wealth and influence than those who served the many nmānōpaitis under his rule.

The fact that it is possible to draw so many parallels between the institutions, customs and ways of thought of the Vedic Indians and Avestan Iranians shows how powerful a formative influence the pastoral life had been which their ancestors lived together upon the Asian steppes. The most frequent symbol which they have in common in their religious literature is that of the cow, the animal which for countless generations

49 On the position and power of the Indian purohita see Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 12-13; Oldenberg, Religion, 375-83; J. Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens 1 (Die Religionen der Menschheit, ed. C. M. Schröder, Bd. 11), Stuttgart 1960, 12.
had been the main source of their livelihood and comfort; and this symbol has the deepest significance for both peoples. In his Gāthās Zoroaster himself used it with a range and complexity of meaning which for long baffled modern interpreters; and it is a striking fact that whereas cattle imagery recurs again and again in his verses, there is not a single simile there drawn from tilling the soil—no mention of plough or corn, seedtime or harvest, though such things are much spoken of in the Younger Avesta, gradually, indeed, replacing cattle in the religious symbolism. The tradition in which the prophet composed his own hymns appears to be still wholly that of a pastoral people; and this brings us back once again to the question of when he lived, which is linked with the problem of when the Iranians occupied Central Asia.

The earliest indication of the presence of Aryans on the Iranian plateau comes, surprisingly, from the south-west of the land; for in Babylonia about 1760 B.C. there is named among the gods of the conquering Kassites (a mountain people from Babylon’s eastern border) a sun-god Surya-s. Clay tablets from Egypt show that about 1400 B.C. there were various local dynasties with Aryan names in Syria and Palestine, and at Boghazkoi in Asia Minor tablets have been discovered relating to the kingdom of Mitanni, in which there occur, together with a few Aryan loan-words and proper names, the names of four Aryan gods among those invoked over a treaty. These are recognizable as the Vedic Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra and Nāṣatya. A strong case has been made on linguistic grounds for regarding these elements in the Mitanni records as proto-

Indian, rather than Indo-Iranian; and this is a remarkable fact, with Indians thus appearing first in history to the west of Iran. It seems, however, that no mass movement was involved in bringing these gods into Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Presumably it was a matter of small warbands penetrating into these ancient kingdoms, either as mercenaries or bold adventurers; and they came perhaps down through the mountain passes to the west of the Caspian. The main migrations must have been of whole peoples, led by their fighting men but bringing with them their chattels in cumbersome ox-drawn carts, and above all their herds, their source of livelihood and wealth; and these, it is held, must have entered Iran through Central Asia, where the flat open country provides grazing for cattle, and has indeed made a natural corridor for nomad invaders down the ages. The main body of the Indian peoples presumably moved first through these territories, branching off south-easterly by the passes leading from Herat down through Sabzavar to Qandahar, whereas the Iranians, following, pressed on south-westernly through Margiana and Parthia, and so on to the Iranian plateau. Some scholars maintain, however, that a number of Indians (or “proto-Indo-Iranians”) had earlier turned on to the Iranian plateau, from perhaps about 1500 B.C., and that it was such migrants who left their traces among the Kassites and Mitanni, before being submerged by the following waves of Iranians.

Central Asia was neither an empty nor a primitive region when the migrations took place. In Parthia archaeologists have identified farming communities which made use of irrigation as early as the 5th millennium B.C., which sets them among the oldest known agriculturalists in the world. By the 2nd millennium the southern part of Central Asia had advanced to the threshold of urban life, and its main centres of population could almost be classified as towns rather than large villages, since they had quarters for specialised crafts and groups of richer houses and

60 On this see, e.g., *Die Iranier*, 212; L. H. Gray, *JCOI* 15, 1929, 10-11; Frye, *Heritage*, 21; Ghirshman, *Iran*, London 1954, 75 ff. There are, nevertheless, archaeologists who argue that the main Iranian invasion was by the Caucasus, see most recently P. Bisch-Gimpel, “The migration route of the Indo-Aryans”, *J. of Indo-European Studies* 1, 1973, 53-17.
61 For some archaeological evidence for the course of Iranian movement on the plateau, derived from the study of early Iron Age pottery, see T. Cuyler Young, “The Iranian migration into the Zagros”, *Iran* V, 1967, 11-34.
62 For this theory see most recently T. Burrow, art. cit.
poorer ones.\textsuperscript{60} There was trade from here southward and westward with the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, whereas the less-advanced northern region seems rather to have bartered goods with the Inner Asian steppes.\textsuperscript{61} Probably its peoples had a long acquaintance, therefore, peaceful or semi-peaceful, with the Indian and Iranian nomads before they began to pour down into the land.\textsuperscript{62} Excavations suggest that they moved into the northern region about 1500 B.C., for it seems then to have passed into the possession of “poor but numerous and apparently warlike tribes of nomadic cattle-breeders”;\textsuperscript{63} and soon after there came about a sudden collapse of the proto-urban civilisation in the south—the large centres of population declined and were abandoned, and the life which went on in smaller oasis-villages seems to have returned to a simpler level.\textsuperscript{64} Whether the Indo-Iranian invaders were as fierce as the Turks and Mongols after them, and as sew as many of the inhabitants of the land, can never be known; but the Avestan \textit{yashts} contain a number of warlike allusions to non-Iranians and prayers to the divine beings for their overthrow; and it is a fact that the language and culture of the older Avesta is almost purely Iranian\textsuperscript{65}, so that in the north-east the conquered peoples, if not slain, appear to have become submerged as wave after wave of migrants passed across their land.

The first absolute dating for settlements of Iranians in Iran itself comes from Assyrian cuneiform tablets. The Assyrians conducted war raids deep into Media (that is, the north-west of Iran, stretching as far east as the salt desert, the Dašt-i Kavīr); and the place-names which they record suggest that in the 8th century B.C. the Iranians were not yet fully dominant in Western Media, whereas in Eastern Media, nearer to the main highway of migration, most place-names seem to have become Iranian at least by 700 B.C.\textsuperscript{66} Among the booby which the Assyrians re-

\textsuperscript{60} See Frumkin, op. cit., 89 and generally; Belenitsky, op. cit., 45; Masson-Sarianidi, op. cit., 98, 112-24.
\textsuperscript{61} See Belenitsky, op. cit., 31, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{62} See Masson-Sarianidi, 152-3.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 137.
\textsuperscript{64} See ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Durrow, JRAS 1973, 123-40, has argued that a small number of words, including the theologically highly important \textit{daeva}, are property Iranian, or rather “proto-Indo-Iranian”; that they belonged, that is, to those Indians who are held to have entered Iran first, being taken over from them in due course by the conquering Iranians. These thesis may well be defensible for some daenic expressions (on which see further below, Cit. 103), but can hardly be upheld for the word \textit{daeva} itself. On this see further in the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{67} See König, op. cit., 12.
\textsuperscript{68} E. Benveniste et L. Renou, \textit{Vītra et Vṛdragna, étude de mythologie indo-iranienne}, Paris 1934, 1.
Vedas was to be regarded as superior; but further investigations have shown that in some respects the sparser Avestan material is more reliable. "The Vedic evidence is valuable for its richness, the Avestan evidence for its fidelity." Naturally this generalisation cannot be valid in every instance, and wherever the same gods were still worshipped by the Indians and Iranians both literatures must be scrutinised in an attempt to distinguish the ancient stratum of belief, and to discern what may have been added, what lost. On the Iranian side the evidence can be supplemented a little from the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings, and notices about Iranian religious observances by Greek historians; for although there were evidently some local variations in beliefs and customs, the diverse pagan Iranian peoples seem to have enjoyed in the main a religious unity, and to have worshipped the same gods with similar rites.

In studying the rituals (in which there appear to have been fewer changes than in beliefs) one has to allow again for elaborations by the Brahmans, with the basic ceremonies becoming ever more prolonged, and the part of the priest ever more dominant; whereas in Iran the strong doctrinal framework of Zoroastrianism, and its prevailing ethical purpose, acted as barriers to such developments. Yet despite these divergences the similarities in rites of worship and funerary customs are in many ways striking, and give further proof that both peoples were intensely conservative in their beliefs and ways. Much has been written about the various fresh influences which affected the Indians in their new home, both from the conquered peoples, and from climate and terrain, with the heat, abundant vegetation and monsoon rains. Those scholars are probably right who see these factors as exerting their influence only very gradually; but in general it is agreed that the Iranians, moving from the Inner Asian steppes to Central Asia and the plateau of Iran itself, with mighty mountain ranges, fertile plains and barren deserts, and with extremes of dry cold and heat, remained in conditions which were closer to those of the shared Indo-Iranian past, and which helped them to sustain tradition. These sharp contrasts tended, moreover, to foster a dualistic way of thought, a tendency to see the opposition in things, which was to find

which profound and sharply defined expression in Zoroastrianism itself. A land such as Iran, it has been said, "rears up no monks or ascetics... but men of action, who are inclined to see life as a perpetual struggle against evil forces. Vigilance and strenuousness were precepts enjoined by the nature of the land itself, long before they were set down in the Avesta." As for the other question, the influence of indigenous peoples on the Iranians, it is impossible to establish any from the Gāthās themselves or the oldest parts of the Younger Avesta, although one or two traces can be found in later portions, and such influences were evidently exerted in course of time (from perhaps the 8th or 7th century B.C.) on the Medes and Persians in Western Iran, where presumably the numbers of Iranian immigrants were fewer and more of the earlier inhabitants survived.

Neither the Iranians nor the Indians of old possessed any chronological system or means of absolute dating. They were unable, therefore, to create historical records (other than the celebration of heroic achievements, king-lists, and mnemonic catalogues of great events). The timelessness of their religious literature creates greater confusion with the Avesta than with the Vedas, because the latter became a closed canon relatively early, and were transmitted therefore orally but in a form as fixed as if they had been enshrined in books. In Iran only the words of Zoroaster himself were strictly memorised, syllable by syllable. Other religious works commanded a less scrupulous reverence, and were handed down in the more fluid tradition of "living, variable, anonymous" oral composition. In such a tradition fixed elements of subject-matter, diction and style are carried along by a current of fresh improvisation from one generation to the next. This oral literature tends to be highly conservative (because its existence is only possible through intensive training and cultivation), and yet is capable of innovation, since new elements can readily be adopted and harmonised with the old, as each generation composes the texts anew within the established tradition. No differences of

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69 Ibid., 182.


72 Tiele, op. cit., 87.

73 For a survey of the pre-Iranian peoples of the plateau and bordering lands see, e.g., Ghirshman, Iran, 27-72; Frye, Heritage, 56-68. A useful bibliography is provided by E. Porada, Ancient Iran, the art of pre-Islamic times, London 1965. Recently Italian archaeologists have excavated sites in Susian which have revealed a rich and ancient civilization in south-eastern Iran, which traded with both Mohenjo-Daro to the east, and Elam to the west, but which, like Elam, evidently succumbed to the Iranians.

74 Such as Pd. II (the account of Yima's war), on which see further below, Ch. 3.

75 Chadwick, Growth of Literature III, 880.
style exist to mark the incorporation of new matter, for on each occasion the hymn or prayer springs entire from the lips of priest or poet. All this is strikingly demonstrated in the so-called "Younger" Avesta (younger linguistically, that is, than the Gāthās), which contains pagan matter that was evidently already old in Zoroaster's day, but which became blended with the prophet's own teachings, and was added to and modified in minor ways for probably at least a millennium after he lived. There is no means of establishing at what time the surviving texts became more or less stabilised in their present form,26 and long after a "final" redaction small alterations appear occasionally to have been made. It is possible that some part of the Avesta was written down in the late Parthian period, but the fixed canon was not established until the Sasanian era, apparently as late as the 6th century A.D. But as has been justly said: "It is a mistake in method to identify the final redaction of an Avestan text, which always marks a purely accidental point in the chain of tradition, with its conception and composition".27 A considerable part of the "Younger" Avesta appears to be ancient in substance and to represent a legacy, devoutly cherished, from a very remote past.

After such an immense time in transmission, during much of which its texts were plainly considered of secondary importance to Zoroaster's Gāthās, it is not surprising that the Younger Avesta should be relatively ill-preserved, with those degeneracies in language and confusions in subject matter which are generally found towards the end of a long oral tradition.28 Nevertheless these texts, and the Pahlavi literature which supplements them, are not only of intrinsic interest, but contain material which is invaluable for understanding both the pagan religion of the ancient Iranians, and the teachings of Zoroaster himself, otherwise enveloped in the sublime obscurities of his great zaotar verses. His doctrines, taught at a remote age to people of an archaic and lost culture, are naturally difficult for modern, mainly urban, man to grasp; and though the ethical consequences of those doctrines can still be seen in the conduct of Zoroastrians today, yet inevitably the intellectual outlook of a citizen of Bombay or Tehran in the 20th century differs vastly from that of an inhabitant of Central Asia three millennia ago. One cannot expect a modern Zoroastrian, unequipped by study, to be able to expound in detail the pristine doctrines of his faith, especially since the learned tradition of his community was stifled by centuries of poverty and persecution, so that no continuity of scriptural exegesis remains. To recover the teachings of Zoroaster in their original form is therefore a difficult matter, for the pursuit of which every aid and scrap of evidence is needed. The best guide remains the tradition of his own community, preserved, it seems, with continuity and consistency (despite the developments inevitable in a long transmission) down to the threshold of modern times. This tradition contains doctrines which (because of borrowings) are profoundly familiar to Christian and Muslim, together with others which are wholly strange, being unique to Zoroastrianism; and it is largely the concentration by individual scholars on either the familiar or the unfamiliar which has produced such divergences in interpreting Zoroaster's teachings. In order to try to grasp these as a whole, and to understand how it is that they have held men's allegiance for so long, it is intended here to consider them not only as doctrine, but also as they found embodiment in observance and cult; and since every prophet of every religion has had to deliver his message in terms comprehensible to his own time and society, it is proposed first to devote several chapters to the pagan faith which nurtured Zoroaster, in the hope of reaching as good an understanding as possible of the beliefs and ways in which he grew up, and from which, as the Gāthās show, he derived much that is embodied in his own revelation.

26 The attribution of the great yafts in their existing form to the 5th century B.C., though commonly made, is no more than a guess, since the setups of evidence on which it was originally based have all proved unreliable, see further in Vol. II.
28 Thus the language often shows grammatical degeneracy, and there is sometimes confusion in contexts, with (in the yafts) the same verse, highly adapted or even identical, occurring addressed to different deities. Epithets too are transferred occasionally, and in one or two instances the functions of divine beings become confused.
CHAPTER TWO

THE GODS OF PAGAN IRAN

Many divine beings are honoured in the Avesta, and probably the original pantheon of Iranian gods is very largely represented there.¹ The names of some are recorded elsewhere in ancient Iran (notably in tablets and inscriptions from Pars), and a few of the greatest were worshipped also by the Vedic Indians. These particular divinities must have been venerated for countless generations by the Indo-Iranians in their nomad days for their cults to have survived in this manner long after the two peoples had parted and made their slow ways to new and very different homes; and it was ancient nomadism, lived on vast steppes, which gave an especial character to these ancestral gods. The Indo-Iranians, as wanderers, had had no temples with images, such as reduced the divinities of settled peoples to local powers with fixed habitats and merely regional authority. Their gods were seen as exercising unbounded influence throughout the world, their sway being limited only by function, since each had his particular character and task; and their universality was splendidly celebrated by the poets of Iran and India, as in the following verses in honour of Mithra/Mitra: "His place is of the width of the earth", "he looks upon that is between earth and heaven", "he holds embraced heaven with his greatness, (holds) embraced the earth with his glory."² In this the high gods of the Indo-Iranians already resembled the deity of monotheistic religions, and foreshadowed in their greatness the dignity of Zoroaster’s own concept of the supreme Lord.

Various collective terms were used by the Indians and Iranians for their divine beings. One was Vedic deva, Avestan daëta, an ancient word cognate with Latin deus and coming from an Indo-European base "shine, be bright". The "Shining Ones" were also called the “Immortals” (Vedic amrita, Avestan amāsā); and the Iranians generally seem also to have used the term baga "one who distributes", a giver of good things. The most interesting expression, however, from the point of view of the history of Zoroastrianism is Vedic asura, Avestan abhura, which is a title meaning "lord", used in both languages for men as well as gods.³ In the Vedas this title is freely given to divine beings in general, the one who receives it most often being in fact Dyaus Pitar, “Father Sky”,⁴ the Indian equivalent of Jupiter, who was originally perhaps the mightiest of the devas. In the often more conservative Iranian tradition, however, only three gods are ever addressed as abhura. They form a group, appearing closely linked in concept and function; and it seems very likely that it is these three who were the original “Lords” of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, and that it was only gradually that among the Indians their characteristic title came to be used respectfully for other gods also.⁵

According to a coherent interpretation worked out during the present century, the ancient Indo-Iranian asuras all personify abstract concepts. In order to comprehend this aspect of Indo-Iranian religion it is vital to grasp the fact that such personifications could become strong and ever-present divinities for their worshippers. "Whatever the origin of the gods which are called abstract many of them attained... to genuine and real popular belief, and were every whit as much living to the popular mind as gods for whom we can see a basis in nature".⁶ It was indeed general Indo-European usage, it has been said, "to conceive as an active reality every

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¹ Although many of the interpretations offered there are out of date, L. H. Gray, “The foundations of the Iranian religions”, JCOU 15, 1949, 1-28, remains the most complete reference book for the Iranian pantheon, bringing together as it does the Avestan and Pahlavi data for every divine being, as well as providing references to their Vedic counterparts. For a more recent bibliography of studies on the Veda material see J. Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens I, Veda und älteres Hinduismus, Stuttgart 1966.

² The facts that the gods are distinguished by function, and that there is a basic similarity between the Avestan and Vedic pantheons, makes it impossible to accept the theory advanced by H. S. Nyberg (Die Religionen des Alten Iran, German tr. by H. H. Schaedler, Leipzig 1938, repr. 1966) that in Iran the ancient Indo-Iranian pantheon was for a time broken up, with the different Iranian peoples worshipping each their own “supreme gods” (Hvangātes), only to have them brought together again by change on the old pattern—in Zoroastrianism, in which faith they were unreally subordinated to Mithra/Mazdā, who had previously been only one of their number. Against Nyberg’s theory, which was adopted and developed by his pupil S. Wikanter and G. Wielgenen, see E. W. Schmidt, Jr., V, 1967, 56; Moldé, Cadre mythique et cosmologique dans l’Iran ancien, Paris 1961, 184; W. Lentz, A Locut’s Leg., Studies in honour of S. H. Taqizadeh, London 1962, 141.

³ Yt. 10.44.75; RV III.59.7. These verses are quoted by P. Thomas, JRS 46, 1956, 47.

⁴ For references to discussions of the word see J. Duchesne-Guillemin, “L’étude de l’iranien ancien au vingtième siècle”, Revue de l’histoire des religions 1962, 197-203.


⁶ See von Bridde, 42 ff. As he says, this fairly general use of what was probably in origin a particular honorific seems in accord with the Vedic tendency to address each of the great gods in the same laudatory terms. See also Gonda, op. cit., 467.

force whose manifestation is perceived. 8 Hence what would now be regarded as an abstraction, such as justice or valour or truth, was seen of old as a power. The process whereby this power, being deified, acquired a character and physical traits, and came to be endowed with myths and worshipped through particular rituals, is one which lies hidden in prehistory; but it must have resembled the making of a pearl, with layer upon layer of belief and observance being added around the grit of the original concept.

In the case of the asuras this process must have been going on for several thousand years before the oldest surviving texts in their honour were composed; and it is plainly, therefore, no easy matter to retrieve the primary concept and comprehend the fundamental nature of these gods. The one among them who best lends himself to study, and through whom one may therefore hope to reach an understanding of the whole triad, is Vedic Mitra, Iranian Mithra. Not only are there Vedic verses addressed to this god, but the longest of the Avestan yazis is devoted to him. He remains, moreover, a much-loved divinity among the Zoroastrians, and there is accordingly a wealth of material both ancient and modern concerning his cult and worship. Further, a common noun mitra exists in Avestan, a mitra in Sanskrit, which provide keys for the unlocking of his ancient mystery.

The Vedic Mitra was known to the West before the Avestan Mithra; and in the Mithraism of the Roman soldier—a religion of mixed origins 9—the Iranian god was celebrated as a divinity linked with the sun. The earliest interpreters of the Vedas saw the Indian faith as a primitive one, and understood its gods to be in the main personifications of natural forces or phenomena; and Mitra was accordingly taken at first to be a solar deity. The Avestan Mithra is also associated with the sun; and so students of Iranian religion likewise accepted this as the primary concept of the god. The Avesta common noun mitra demonstrably, however, means something like "pact, contract, covenant", that is, an agreement entered into between men; and in 1907 A. Meillet presented a lucidly,

reasoned case for regarding the Indo-Iranian Mithra as the personification of the power which lay in such undertakings. 10 As he pointed out, in past times "the contract was in principle a religious act, encircled by prescribed ceremonies, made with certain rites; and the words which accompanied it were not those of simple individual undertakings; they were those of formulas [i.e. mathras], endowed with a force of their own, which would, by virtue of this inner potency, turn back against any man who should transgress them. The Indo-Iranian Mithra is at the same time 'contract' and the power immanent in the contract." 11 Having reached this conclusion, he suggested a possible etymology for the word, from an IE verbal base *mesi "exchange". 12

Meillet probably chose the French word "contract" to render the ancient Indo-Iranian concept because this had been invested with a certain grandeur by Rousseau's exposition of "le contrat social". In English "contract" has only narrowly legalistic associations, and hence some scholars using this language have preferred the term "covenant", with its richer religious and moral overtones. 13 "Loyalty to the covenant" is possibly, moreover, the nearest approximation that one can achieve in English to the ethical aspect of the divinity. 14 Since this phrase is too clumsy for general purposes, the term "loyalty" is sometimes used by itself in the following pages.

Meillet's interpretation was at once accepted by several leading Iranists, but the first reaction of Vedic scholars seemed adverse. 15 The suggestion was more difficult for them to entertain, because in Sanskrit the common noun mitra means not "covenant" but "friend". 16 The sense "covenant" survives, it is true, in the compound bala-mitra "having established a covenant"; 17 but the idea of contractual undertakings is by

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8 A. Meillet, *Trois conférences sur les Gāthā de l'Avesta*, 59. On this subject see most recently J. Gonda, *Some observations on the relations between "Gods" and "powers" in the Veda*, 4-S. Gravenhage 1952. The Indo-Iranian "abstract" gods have their counterparts in the pagan pantheons of Greece and Rome (e.g. Nike "Victory", Dike, "Justice", Fides "Fidelity"); but it is nevertheless difficult for modern scholars to enter into this aspect of ancient religious life, and Nyberg for one denied the validity of the concept, seeing in what others call "abstract" divinities rather the personification of "social collectives", who represented the society of those who worshipped them in its various aspects, religious, political and economic. See his *Religionen des Alien Iran*, 70, 82, 118 et passim.

9 It is not proposed to discuss this religion, which seems largely alien to Iran, anywhere in the present book. For some recent work on it see Mithraic Studies, ed. J. R. Hinnells, 2 vols., Manchester 1975.

10 "Le dieu indo-iranien Mitra", *Ja* 1907, 143-59.
11 Ibid., 156.
12 For further discussion of the possible etymology of the word see the references given by J. Gershevitch, *The Avestan hymns to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, 28 n.
13 This rendering has been used by H. W. Bailey and others. Gonda's objection to it (The Vedic god Mitra, Leiden 1972, 109), that there is no undertaking between Mithra and his worshippers comparable to that between Jehovah and the Jews is not valid. The English word is not used solely in this connection, but is also, like contract, a common legal term.
16 On the gender and form of this noun see Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, Trans. of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 41, 1957, 35 n. 25; Gonda, op. cit., 114-5.
17 See L. Renou, *Grammaire de la langue véđique*, 137; H. W. Bailey, *TPS* 1953, 40; contra Gonda, op. cit., 106 n. 6 (translating instead "with whom one has made friends" of "whose friendship is beneficial").
no means prominent in the Vedic texts concerning the god.18 After some
decades Meillet's theory was, however, strongly endorsed by the comparatist
G. Dumézil, who gave it wide currency;19 by the Sanskritist P.
Thieme, who developed it with precise scholarly arguments;20 and by the
Iranist I. Gershevitch, who likewise lent it the support of deeply learned
consideration.21 By now it is probably accepted by the majority of those
working in these fields; but there are still individual scholars who argue
vigorously against it. The fact that Persian has a word mihir meaning
"loving kindness, friendship", taken in connection with Sanskrit mitrā
"friend", led Herzfeld, for example, to maintain that "the god bore
the name Mitrā already in the Aryan epoch, not as a pale personification
of the notion "contract"... but as 'the friend'."22 and recently Lentz has
followed him in so far as to hold that the essential concept is one of a
beneficent force.23 His interpretation, that the Avestan Mithra represents
"the striving of man to act according to the religion by telling the truth
and by behaving in a balanced way and with liberality towards his
neighbours"24 seems, however, too general to be helpful for understanding
the genesis of the god. An Indianist, J. Gonda, has nevertheless come to
somewhat similar conclusions on the basis of the Vedas alone, which
show, he considers, that "the main idea the god stands for is the main-
tenance, without wrath or vengeance, of right, orderly relations, manifesta-
tions of which were, first and foremost, the active benevolence and will-
ingness to help and redress".25 Thus deliberately to ignore the evidence
of the Avestan yâst to Mithra, which bears many marks of antiquity,
hardly seems sound scholarly procedure, however; and the weakness of
this approach is, as Gonda himself admits,26 that it then becomes difficult
to discover any coherence in the various functions attributed to
the divinity. The same problem must be felt, one would think, by those
who still maintain that the identification of Mitrā with the sun is primary;27
whereas those who uphold the concept of the "covenant" as fundamental

18 But cf. drogāmātra "whose covenant is a lie", ontrā "without covenant", that is, not
recognizing the sacredness of covenants, see Thieme, JAS 1 LXX, 1960, 197.
19 Mitrā-Vārūya, Paris 1940.
22 Zoroaster and his World I, Princeton 1947, 86. One notes the prevalence of the idea
that such a personification must necessarily be "pole".
23 "The 'social functions' of the Old Iranian Mithra", Heyne Year Book II, 1925, 45-55.
24 Art. cit., 252.
26 Ibbid., 50.
27 For references to the works of Indian scholars who take this position see Gonda, op.
cit., 130.

have produced what seem adequate explanations for all those traits which
are common to the Indian and Avestan texts.28

To study Mitrā/Mithra is naturally not easy; for after thousands of
years of worship and invocation the god of the Avesta and Vedas is no
longer a simple personification, but has grown into a powerful deity of
manifold activities. Nevertheless, it seems possible to discern a funda-
mental harmony reconciling all his functions. One of the striking features
of his activity is that he is concerned with upholding the great Indo-
Iranian principle of rīta/aśa.29 This term, it is now generally accepted,
represents a concept which cannot be precisely rendered by any single
word in another tongue.30 It stands, it seems, for "order" in the widest
sense: cosmic order, by which night gives place to day and the seasons
change; the order of sacrifice, by which this natural rhythm is strengthen-
ed and maintained; social order, by which men can live together in
harmony and prosperity; and moral order or "truth". In both India and
Iran to possess rīta or aśa, to be rītāvan or aśavan, was to be a just and up-
right being; and when used of the dead these words implied that the
departed was blessed in the hereafter, having attained the Paradise which
he deserved.31 In the Vedas rīta is opposed to the negative anta,32 with
which is associated druk "falsehood". The Iranian Mithra, as lord of the
covenant, mitrā, is the natural foe of the mītrā/druj, the man who is
false to the pact he has made;33 and it is presumably because such false-
hood is a breach of moral aśa that the god came to be regarded by exten-
sion as the protector of aśa in all its aspects—a role of such grandeur that

28 The later Indian texts inevitably yield a number of over-subtle elaborations, with
Mitrā as with other gods, to which, in isolation, no weight can be attached. Thus it is not a
valid argument concerning the genesis of the Indo-Iranian Mitra to declare, as Gonda does
(op. cit., 90): "I cannot properly say how the god... should as the originator of a creed used
as a catheter have anything to do with a contract".
29 By a sound change peculiar to Avestan, Indo-Iranian rīt > *i; the Old Persian equiva-
 lent of the word is apa. On the basic unity of the Indian and Iranian conceptions see Geiger,
Die Amanī Spenta, 164 f. In the Vedas rīta, a neuter noun, represents a principle rather
than a divinity, and this was presumably the case in pagan Iran also.
30 For a general discussion, with bibliography, see H. Lüders, Varna II (Varna und
das Rta), aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von L. Abdero, Gottingen 1959, 403-6. Lüders
himself translated rīta as "truth", and Gershevitch, AHM, passim, followed him in rendering
Aśa in the same way; but subsequently he accepted the arguments of Kuiper (IJ V,
1961, 41-5) that to do so would restrict the significance of the word unduly. See more
recently Gonda, Rel. Ind Ian 1, 72-9.
31 On the different destinations of the dead in Indo-Iranian belief see Ch. 4, below. On
aśavan/rītavan see Bailey, Zoro. Problems, 97 n. 4. Kuiper, IJ VII, 1960, 185 f. has suggested
that except in Zoroastrianism these adjectives were used only for the dead. (So, earlier,
J. H. Kramers also see, Kuiper, IJ VII, 1964, 129 n. 168.) Further Gershevitch, JNES
32 Sin, as a breach of heavenly law or order, is described in the Brāhmaṇas as anta, see
S. Rodhe, Deliver us from evil, Lund-Copenhagen 1946, 159-61.
33 See, e.g. Yt. 10,2, 82.
In India it came to overshadow his primary concern, which was with rta as it affected undertakings entered into among men. In his Avestan yašt Mithra is said to direct men “into the path of aša (ašāh paiti panić)” and to bestow on them “possession of aša (aśavasta-).” He tirelessly guards those who are aśavas, and destroys the wicked who attack them.

To know who is aśava, Mithra must assess the actions of men, and see who keep the many covenants, mithras, that hold society together, who betray them. The wide range of these covenants is indicated in his yašt, where the list includes agreements between friends and fellow-citizens, the contracts of trading partners, and the marriage bond joining husband and wife, as well as treaties entered into between states. With so much to watch over, the god must be ever alert. As it is said in the Veda, “unblinking, Mithra regards the settlements of men,” and for this reason it used to be thought, the god came to be associated with the sun which from dawn to dusk makes its own unwinking way above men’s heads as they go about their daily affairs. The primary link between divinity and planet is evidently more fundamental than this, however, and arose through an original association of Mithra, lord of the covenant, with fire; for it appears from both the Iranian and Indian sources that it was ancient custom to swear to covenants by Mithra, their personified power, in the presence of fire, which, whether as the flame on the hearth, sustaining

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44 On the ordeals by fire see further below, pp. 35-6.
45 See Yt. 10.13.142, and the comments by Gershevitch, AHM 31, 319-20. In the 3rd century A. C. Manichaean missionaries to Parthia adopted Mithra to represent a divinity connected with the east, see Boyce, “On Mithra in the Manichaean pantheon”, A Louts Leg. Studies in honour of S. H. Tapiædæh, 47; and in the next century one encounters Shabbihr II ordering a Christian to pray to “the sun, the God of the east” (Braun, loc. cit.), which again shows the fusion of sun- and Mithra-worship. On the connection of the Vedic Mithra with daybreak see Thieme, Mithra, and Aryaman, 69, Gonda, The Vedic God Mithra, 58-9. The ever-vigilant Mithra is present, however, not only with the sun by day, but also with the luminaries of the night sky, see Boyce, BSOAS XXXII, 1969, 30 with n. 103.
46 See Yt. 10.15.67,90.11.8.
47 Yt. 10.197 (on which see Benveniste, RHR CXXX, 1945, 14-16; Boyce, Art. cit., 25 n. 74).
48 On this aspect of sacrifice see further below, Ch. 6.
49 Yt. 10.63.61.
god because of his link with the "life-giving" sun;\(^{48}\) but they probably originate rather than the ancient, widespread belief that when a ruler was upright and loyal to his undertakings, then his country was rewarded with rain and good crops, whereas a king's wrong-doing brought drought and pestilence.\(^{49}\) "The soudrel who breaks a covenant destroys the whole land."\(^{50}\)

Mithra not only oversees all covenants,\(^{61}\) but having seen, he judges; and it is as the Judge that he is invoked in his vast,\(^{52}\) and has been worshipped by Iranians down the ages\(^{53}\)—a being unswervingly just, and never to be deceived. Because he is just, he is a powerful protector to those who deserve his benevolence; and it is thought that it was as protector that he gained his standard Iranian epithet of "having wide pastures" (\textit{voven gaoyat})\(^{54}\)—pastures, that is, in which the nomad Iranians, keeping faith with him, could safely graze their herds. And because to the loyal he was the kindliest of gods, without caprice or terror, his name, it is suggested, came to stand for the Friend of the \textit{aman}, and so in time for "friend" or "friendliness" in general.\(^{55}\) But being just, Mithra had inevitably another aspect, that of the stern and terrible punisher of the faithless, whom he smites and crushes.\(^{56}\) As such he is a "wrathful Lord",\(^{57}\) a being to be dreaded; but since men more readily regard their enemies as wicked than themselves, through this aspect Mithra became also a war god, fighting for the righteous Iranians against their foes.\(^{58}\) His concept was then enriched with all the trappings of a warrior, added to those of a solar deity: he is a chariot-rider whose white horses, shod with silver and gold, cast no shadow;\(^{59}\) a fighter armed with a mighty mace of bronze,\(^{60}\) and with spear, bow and arrows, knife and sling-stones.\(^{61}\) A martial character is nowhere ascribed to the Vedic Mitra; but Thiemie has found small indications which show, he thinks, that both Mitra and Varuna once possessed a warrior aspect which they had lost by the time the Rigveda took its final shape;\(^{62}\) and there, it seems, the punitive aspect of the two Indo-Iranian gods has moreover been largely ascribed to Varuna, leaving Mithra (in so far as he is separately celebrated) more purely benevolent. There are, however, verses which show that he nevertheless resembled his Iranian counterpart in having the power to dismay as well as to delight his worshippers, in being both "wicked and very good to men"\(^{63}\), as for instance: "May we not be under the wrath of Varuna and Vayu, not (under that) of Mitra, who is most dear to men".\(^{64}\) These two [Mitra and Varuna] have many slings, they are fetters of untruth (\textit{antra}—), difficult for the deceitful mortal to circumvent.\(^{65}\) These and other similar passages clearly indicate that the Vedic priests too ascribed a stern and wrathful character to Mitra on occasion, even if they no longer gave prominence to this aspect of the god. Like most other Indo-Iranian divinities, Mithra was conceived in human shape, even if greater than any mortal king; but because of his superhuman vigilance he had the epithets "having a thousand perceptions, ten thousand eyes,"\(^{66}\) terms which presumably referred to his servitors, the "watchers of the covenant" (\textit{spastis... mithrae}), who gaze out from every height, over every quarter of the compass, noting "those who first break the covenant".\(^{67}\) (The spies of the Achaemenian kings were similarly spoken of as being their "eyes" and "ears",\(^{68}\) and the usage appears to be old.)

As well as these vigilant spirits ever at his service, Mithra had close associates among the other gods—for no member of the Avestan or Vedic pantheon is ever seen in isolation. Lesser divinities encircle him; and above all the Vedic Mitra acts constantly in partnership with Varuna, his mighty
peer. Varuna is one of the two chief gods of the Rigveda, the other being the deva Indra. He, like Indra, is hailed as universal king (samrāj), one whose “ordinances are established” (dhātvarata), these being obeyed even by the other gods. He was envisaged as holding royal state, clad in golden mantle and shining robe, driving, like Mithra, in a chariot, and having in the highest heaven his golden abode. He was the “all-knowing lord” (asura viṣāvedas), ever aware of the deeds of men. “If a man is standing or going, and if he is jumping—if he goes into hiding, if he stiffens—whatever two men deliberate, having sat down together, king Varuṇa knows that as the third one” (Av 4.16.2-9). Like the Iranian Mithra, he is a thousand-eyed, having his spies to observe the world; and the two divinities share a moral nature and preocupations. Ethically Varuṇa is indeed the noblest of the Vedic gods, abhorring sin, forgiving the penitent but punishing the transgressor who awakens his sometimes bitter wrath. His worshippers approach him with fear and trembling, and yet also with trust. “Varuṇa is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his celestial abode, and sometimes sees him with the mental eye. The righteous hope to behold in the next world Varuṇa and Yama, the two kings who reign in bliss”. This great ethical being is endowed, like Vedic Mitra, with māyā, the supernatural power, hidden and incomprehensible, through which he acts. This mysterious force could also be thought of, at least by Vedic times, as something capricious; and according to the poets it enabled its possessors to deceive others while themselves remaining undetected. It is suggested that it was through the constant attribution of māyā to the asuras that their title became gradually associated with evil, and eventually came to be used also of dark forces opposed to the gods. Those scholars are surely right, however, who maintain that deception and caprice had no part in the original character of Varuṇa. In his ethical aspect Varuṇa, together with Mitra, is the guardian of rīta as moral order. He also, together with Mitra, protects rīta as order in the natural world. The two gods are indeed so closely linked in their benefic activities that they are commonly invoked together by a compound Mitrā-varuṇā of a type called by the Hindu grammarians dvandva or “pair” compounds (since the two elements have the same relationship as if they were linked by the conjunction “and”). So closely and regularly are the two gods associated, indeed, that they became for Vedic poets the typical pair, and so could be referred to metaphorically through almost any pair of things, antithetical or supplementary, such as night and day, left hand and right, indrawn and outdrawn breath. But although this suggests that originally they were of equal power and standing, in the Vedic hymns Varuṇa has by far the greater prominence, hugely overshadowing his divine partner. Vast cosmic powers are assigned to him, for it was he who established heaven and earth, and āsāra “dominion” is especially his. Through his māyā he controls the forces of nature, sending the dawn and causing the honey of rain to fall upon the earth. Water indeed belongs peculiarly to Varuṇa in all its manifestations. He is addressed as “Child of the Waters” (apāṁ sīśa), and water is revered as holding him, and is used therefore to invoke his presence. If in Vedic times a man built a house, “he should among many other ritual acts pour some water into a barrel while pronouncing the stanzas: ‘Hither must king Varuṇa come with the abundant (waters); at this place must he stay, rejoicing’”.

So close is this association that it has been suggested that the primary concept of Varuṇa was that of a personification of the Waters themselves. Another interpretation was that he was god of the Sky, to be connected with Greek Ouranos (an identification long since rejected both on philological grounds, and because of the lack of actual connection between Varuṇa and the sky in the Indian texts or ritual). He has also been seen as god of the moon. When, however, Meillet propounded his theory of the ethical, “abstract” nature of Mitra, he pointed out that, since Varuṇa is so closely linked with him, it is reasonable to suppose that the primary concepts of the two deities were very much alike. Accordingly he suggested the possibility that Varuṇa’s name came from the IE verbal root nor “speak”, varuṇa being perhaps a lost common noun meaning itself “law”.

76 In such compounds the shorter name regularly stands first, so that priority is not proof of pre-eminence.
77 Thieme points out that it is therefore misleading to read overmuch significance into any particular associations of this type, as has been done especially with regard to the pair “night and day.”
78 See in detail Lüders, Varuṇa I (Varuna und die Wasser), Göttingen 1951.
79 V S 10,7 (cited by Lüders, op. cit. 50-1).
80 KSS 25,5-28 (cited by Gonda, The Vedic god Mitra, 31).
81 For references see Lüders, op. cit., 67.
82 For the literature see ibid., op. cit., 3-4.
83 See ibid., 4, 6 with n. 1.
or even (as a synonym of *mitra) "contract". This suggestion was taken up by other scholars; but Peterson, proposing a derivation instead from the IE root *ver "bind, tie," interpreted the meaning of the postulated *varuna as "binding utterance, oath"—the solemn truthful affirmation which constrains a man, and which must of old have been invested with the same latent supernatural power as the solemn pact or bond. This interpretation is in harmony with the mythological trait of Varuna's whereby he binds the sinner with fetters, and removes sin as if untying a rope. It was further developed by Lüders in his massive monograph on Varuna, in which he pursued two main themes: how, through the oath, Varuna acquired his secondary trait as god of the Waters, and how, as god of the oath, he was with Mitra the natural guardian of *fia in the sense of "truth". The god's association with the waters arose, he suggested, from an ancient link between Varuna, oath-taking, and this element, whereby a man swore a solemn oath by the god in the presence of water, or holding water in his hand. He further pointed out that this accords admirably with the fact that in both India and Iran oaths and compacts are sworn by Mithra and by fire. The two gods of verbal undertakings were thus each, it seems, associated with one of the two elements which were the main objects of the Indo-Iranian cult.

The link between Mitra and Varuna and the two elements was evidently stronger, moreover, than one created merely by invoking these gods in their presence, and involved the use of fire and water in ordeals to test veracity, whereby the divinity was made the judge. The evidence, in both Iran and India, is relatively late, but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity or the traditional nature of the practices involved. Both forms of ordeal were undergone by those accused of some form of wrongdoing, who had sworn their innocence. In the ordeal by water, as described in the Yajñavalkya 2.108 ff, the accused was required to submerge himself. As the water closed over his head an arrow was shot, and a nimble man sped off to retrieve it. If when he returned the accused was still beneath the water, and alive, his innocence was held to be established. Before submerging he was to "adjure the water (abhāsāvyam)"—that is, the divinity present in the water—with the formula: "Through truth protect me, Varuna (satyena mādhīrakāvasya, Varuna)".

Several forms of fire ordeal are attested in Iran. In one, said to have been undergone by the warrior-prince Syāvārān in remote antiquity, two huge fires were lit close to one another, and when they were blazing fiercely, "so that the earth was more radiant than the sky", the hero rode at a furious pace along the narrow way between them. The flames "closed over his head", but because he was innocent he reappeared unscathed, for "when... God doth so vouchsafe, the breath of fire is even as the wind". There can be no doubt that for the ancient Iranians the god in question was Mithra the Judge. In the other form of ordeal by fire metal was heated until it melted, and then poured on the naked breast of the accused. If he survived, he was innocent. "If they pour (it) on the body and heart of a wicked man, he is burnt and dies." This form of ordeal inspired Zoroaster's own great vision of the Last Judgment, with the stream of molten metal which will then test the guilt and innocence of all mankind. In historical times it is said to have been undergone by the Sasanian priest Adurbād i Maharaspandān to prove the truth of his statement of Zoroastrian orthodoxy against the claims of heretics. Many other varieties of fiery ordeal are said to have been administered by the Iranians of old, and it was, moreover, common usage to oblige a man taking an oath to swallow a drink containing sulphur, the brimstone or "burning stone" of English idiom. (The standard Persian expression for "to swear" remains accordingly "to drink sulphur", sōgand khorand.) The purpose of this practice was essentially the same as that of the fiery ordeal, for it was believed that if the testifier swore falsely, or in ancient idiom committed mihr-dārjīh, "betrayal of the covenant", then the sulphur would burn him up from within, more slowly but no less surely than fire or molten metal would destroy a treacherous man from without. "It is just as when a person falls into a fire, and his body is burnt, and his life endangered, so

89 Supp. texts to Sāvest nā-sāvest XV.17 (ed. Kotwal, 63).
90 See Ch. 9, below.
91 See Vol. II.
92 According to the dastūrs of Islamic times there were 33 varieties of such ordeals, see Rūyādat, ed. Unvala I 45-9, transl. Dhabhar, 39. On this subject, and on the connection of the fiery ordeal with Mithra, see Boyce, "On Mithra, lord of fire", Memorandum H. S. Nyberg, ed. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, Louvain 1975. Vol. I, and further in Vol. IV of the present work.
he who takes a false oath... burns up himself, his family and his soul."^93

Hence it was that fire became closely linked both with Mithra and with āśa, the "truth" which the great ahūra helped to guard.

There was clearly a parallel development in ancient times with Varuṇa and water, in both cases the god's presence being felt in the actual element which slew or spared. With regard to Varuṇa's own concept Thieme,^94 who endorsed Meillet's interpretation of his nature, suggested that this was probably basically the broad one of "true speech", embracing that of the oath; and this, if one seeks a parallel to Mithra's ethical characteristic of "loyalty", may be yet further extended to "veracity" or "truth". According to these interpretations Varuṇa is thus the personification of an ethical "abstraction" of exactly the same type as Mithra. As Thieme has shown, the sense of "true speech" satisfies admirably certain Rigvedic passages in which the god's name occurs,^95 as well as explaining the "basic similarity and partial identity"^96 of himself and Mithra. Both gods had their great part to play in maintaining human society. Moreover, "veracity" like "loyalty" had cosmic significance of old, since it was "by the magic power of spoken truth (ṛta)"^97 that the world was created. Both deities had also their link with the sacrifice, contractual in Mithra's case, and in Varuṇa's through the power of the truly uttered word, embodied in the sacred mantras. This common association with spoken undertakings would explain their being among the gods invoked at the making of the Mitanni treaty;^98 but their functions, although so similar, seem in origin to have been differentiated in this respect, that the covenant personified by Mithra was properly an undertaking to which two parties pledged themselves, whereas the vow presided over by Varuṇa was a one-sided engagement, a personal commitment. This distinction was, however, relatively slight; and in India, as the concepts of the two gods blended, Varuṇa took over most of their common traits, so that, as we have seen, the sternness which in Iran belongs also to the just Mithra in the Vedas is ascribed very largely to his brother āśa.^99

The fact that no common noun *varuṇa survives in either Vedic or

Avestan means that there is necessarily more conjecture in defining Varuṇa's being than that of Mithra. There are nevertheless some associated words which seem to support the interpretation of the god's name as meaning originally "true utterance". There is Vedic vrata-, a much discussed term particularly associated with Varuṇa, which is generally rendered by such English words as "law, ordinance, rule; promise, vow";^101 and in Iranian there occur Avestan varah, Pahlavi var and varəstān which earlier were rendered as "ordeal" and "place of the ordeal",^102 but which, it is now suggested,^103 should rather be understood as "oath" and "place of oath-taking".

There is, however, a further difficulty to make the study of Varuṇa more intricate than that of Mithra: there is no god in the Iranian pantheon who is called *Vouruna. (This is the form which, it is thought, his name would have taken in Avestan.)^104 But since it seemed impossible that so great a deity, and one so closely linked with Mithra, should be forgotten in Iran, it was widely assumed that it was he who of old became the "god of the Iranians", growing to be so exalted in their eyes that his worshippers ceased to name him directly, but invoked him instead with reverence as Ahura Mazda, the "Wise Lord". Thus in the course of time, it was suggested, his personal name, through disuse, became forgotten, and this title alone remained. Such a development is clearly not impossible, and indeed the replacement of a proper name by an appellative seems to have taken place with more than one Iranian divinity. Various arguments have, however, been brought on other grounds against this interpretation. Thus it seems probable that the Iranian Ahura Mazda was exalted over Mithra even before Zoroaster preached, being recognized as a greater god by the Persians as well as by the Avestan peoples; and this suggests that his Vedic parallel may have been, not Varuṇa, the deeanu partner of Mithra, but the nameless Asura or Lord who appears in a few Rigvedic passages as

^93 See Riv., Unvala, I 53.2-7, Dhabhar, 39.
^94 See his Mītra and Aryaman, 41 ff.
^95 Ibid., 62 ff.
^96 Ibid., 59.
^97 Ibid., 64.
^99 It has been suggested that Varuṇa is sincerer than Mithra, and more concerned than any other Vedic god with sins and transgressions, because the one-sided oath is more readily broken than a pact between two persons, and so his worshippers were constantly penitent; but this seems a little forced.

^100 For objections to the above interpretations see, e.g., Kuiper, III, 210-11. He himself, although rejecting Dunand's characterization of Mitra and Varuṇa as opposite aspects of "sovereignty" (see his remarks in Numen VIII, 1961, 36-9), nevertheless maintains that the close association of the two gods is antithetical rather than complementary, the one opposing the other. (See in more detail his exposition in IV, V, 1961, 46-54.)

^101 See H.-P. Schmidt, Vedic "vrata" and avestic "urolta", Hamburg 1955; Thieme, German Scholars in India, 345. Contra, Gonda, The Vedic God Mitra, 9-10, 100 with n. 3 (who suggests rendering the word as "functional rule of conduct").

^102 See Bartholomae, AS, Wb., 1365-6.

^103 H. W. Bailey in Mitraic Studies I, ed. Hanellis, 14 with n. 29.

^104 See Gershevitch, AHM, 37 ff.

^105 E.g., *Harahvait Aredví Sūr, and possibly *Zam Sponta Ārmaiti, see further below.
a higher being than even these two. He is described as "Our Father, the
Asura, who sprinkles down the waters":106 and to Mirra and Varuna their
worshippers say: "You two make the sky rain through the magic power
(māyā) of Asura,107 "you two protect your ordinances (vrata) through
the magic power of Asura, through truth (ma-) you rule the universe".108
The Asura thus appears raised above Mirra and Varuna, as Ahura Mazdā
is above the Iranian Mithra.

The question then arose, could "Mazdā" (or rather its Indian equivalent)
be in fact the missing proper name of this Vedic Asura—was the Iranian
god really the Lord Mazdâ, as Mithra was the Lord Mithra (Ahura
Mithra)?109 The word mazdā has been a perplexity to grammarians,
because the inflection is irregular; and philologists have been divided be-
tween those who regard it as having a stem in -ah, and those (now proba-
ble majority) who understand it as having a stem in -ā.110 Neither inter-
pretation satisfies conclusively all the irregularities; but the divergence
of opinion was concerned mainly with the declension of the word, both
groups uniting in regarding it as an adjective meaning "wise". Already in
the late 19th century, however, A. V. W. Jackson had interpreted Mazdā
instead as a substantive, corresponding with the Vedic feminine noun
medhā- "mental vigour, perceptive power, wisdom": and he accordingly
rendered Ahura Mazdâ’s name as "Lord Wisdom".111 This he did without
discussion, and without, it seems, evoking much scholarly debate. A few
others adopted this interpretation, however, including Benveniste, who
argued from it to the ancientness of the concept of the "Lord Wisdom" as
"a being of the family of the Asuras."112 The same interpretation was sub-
sequently proposed again by Sten Konow.113 He examined the meanings

106 RV 5.83.6d. (This and the following verses are given in Thiem's translation.)
107 RV 5.63.3d.
108 RV 5.63.7bc.
109 Vedic scholars in the past, considering the question without reference to Iranian
parallels, variously identified "the Asura" as the sky-god Dyaus or the rain-god Parjanya,
both of whom are referred to as "the Father". For the older literature on the subject see
Geiger, Die Amesa Sanātans, 218 n. 1; Hillebrandt, ZIII IV, 217, subsequently upheld the
identification of "the Asura" as Dyaus despite Geiger’s objections. See also his Vedicke
Mythologie, 2nd ed., 1929, Ti 9. There have been scholars on the Iranian side who have
accepted this identification, and have further sought to identify Ahura Mazdā with this
110 See Kuiper, "Avestan Mazdâ", III 1, 1937, 86-95; H. Humbach, "Ahura Mazdā
und die Dävas", Wiener Zeitschrift f. d. Kunde Süd- und Ostantis 1, 1957, 81-94; Thiem in
Zarathustra, ed. Scherzath, 406-7 (with further references).
111 See An Avesta Grammar, Part I, Stuttgart 1892, 102; Zoroastrian Studies, 39;Persia past and present, 352.
112 The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts, Paris 1924, 40.
113 Medhā and Mazdā, Jhâ Commemoration Vol., Essays on oriental subjects present-
ed in Jhâ Commemoration Volume. Essays on oriental subjects presented in... Poonah Oriental
THE PAGAN BACKGROUND

This is the mysterious Apám Napát, Vedic Apám Napát, the “Son of the Waters”.128

The position of the Zoroastrian Apám Napát is in many respects perplexing. As far as the cult is concerned, he seems at first sight a minor deity. No hymn is addressed to him, and no day of the month is assigned to his care. With Haoma and Dahmān Afrin he makes up the 30 chief yazatas of the Zoroastrian pantheon,129 and like them he is accordingly invoked in every service dedicated to the divine beings; but in living observance at least no yasna is ever devoted to him alone. Yet in the liturgy of every yasna service, whenever water is invoked, it is Apám Napát who is invoked with it.130 Moreover, in the divisions of the day (which seem older than the calendar dedications)131 the morning is set under the protection of great Mithra, the afternoon under that of Apám Napát. This means that down the ages every Zoroastrian who has prayed in the afternoon (and the orthodox are required to pray during each watch) has daily invoked the “Son of the Waters”. He is therefore a dominant figure in the cult, despite his apparent obscurity.

The same striking anomalies appear in the Avestan texts as in the ritual. Thus in some passages the god appears only as a shadowy, background figure, associated with other more prominent deities of water. In the hymn to the river-goddess, Aradvi Sūrā, there is an obscure reference to what appears to be a place dedicated to Apám Napát, but at it a worshipper sacrifices to Aradvi.132 In the hymn to Tīstryā, god of the rain star, it is said: “Apám Napát distributes to the material world those waters assigned to dwelling-places . . .”,133 and another verse runs: “We

128 Yt. 8.3-4. This task of Apám Napát’s is mentioned in several places in Pahlavi literature, e.g., Gab. VI 3a (ed. TDA, 67-5; trans. BTA, 73); Zádšpam, III.8 (ed. BTA, 19-20, 63a).
worship the glorious ... star Tistrya ... from whom, the lofty one, is fame; from Apām Napāt (his?) nature (apām naṣāḥrat hātā šīrōm)." 134

There are other Avestan passages which suggest, however, that the ancient Apām Napāt was not only associated with the waters, but was once a very great god in the Iranian pantheon. He is in fact the only god other than Ahura Mazda and Mithra who is ever hailed as “Ahura”; and he shares with the latter (with whom he parts the daylight hours) the Ahuric task of maintaining order in the world of men. The following striking verse concerning him occurs in Yašt 19 (a hymn dedicated to the Earth): 135 “We worship the high Lord, imperial, majestic; Son of the Waters, who has swift horses, the hero who gives help when called upon. (It is) he who created men, he who shaped men, the god amid the waters, who being prayed to is the swiftest of all to hear” (horzantan ahuram xšaērim xšadēm apām napātēm auruvaē apem yazamāide aršānum zavanē, sum, yō noršū dāda, yō noršū tataša, yō upāpō yazātā sruḍ gosāo. temō asti yezimmō). The opening words of this verse, horzantan ahuram, the “high Lord”, are used in all invocations of the “Son of the Waters”; and in Sasanian and present usage he is known accordingly simply as Buzr or Buir, the “High One”, which in one place is glossed as Buzr i Abānāf, “the High One, who is the Son of the Waters”. 136 How old this usage cannot be determined; but it suggests that Apām Napāt was not in fact the Ahura’s proper name, but simply another descriptive appellation, “Buri” being given preference to it in invoking him.

Another passage concerning the god occurs in Yašt 13 (the hymn to the frawašis). It runs as follows: “Mithra of wide pastures will further all ruling councils of the lands, and pacify (the lands) that are in turmoil. Henceforth the mighty Apām Napāt will further all ruling councils of the lands, and restrain (the lands) that are in turmoil”. 137 In this verse these two great Ahruras are thus seen acting together and as equals for the same end, namely to preserve order, asa, in human society. Similarly in Yašt 19 it is told how they strive to protect the divine Khvaranah or kingly Fortune, by which legitimate rule is maintained among the Iranians. When

Yima allowed a “lying, untrue word” into his mind (v. 34) the Fortune hit him and passed into the guardianship of Mithra and fire, and thereafter into that of water (represented by the sea Vourukaša), whereupon Apām Napāt seized it “at the bottom of profound bays” (v. 51). 144 Thus the two Ahruras not only pursue the same goal, of keeping the Khvaranah safe from wicked possessors, but one does so, characteristically, in connection with fire, the other with water. 145

The Pahlavi texts are in accord with the Avesta in presenting Apām Napāt (as the yazad Buzr) primarily as a water-god, who dwells amid the great mythical waters of the world; but they also celebrate him still as the god who watches over Khvaranah (Khvarrah). The following passage is the most comprehensive: “The abode of the yazad Buzr is there where are Ardvishr and the unfelled Waters. And his chief duty is to distribute the water of the sea [Vourukaša] to all regions. This (task) too is “his, that he saves creatures from high surges in crossing the sea, and watches always over Khvarrah”. 146 It is presumably because of his care for the Khvaranah or Fortune of the Iranian peoples that the following strange myth is told of him: “Every third year many from non-Iranian lands gather together upon the summit of Mount Harbuz, in order to go into the Iranian lands to cause bringing of harm and destruction on the world. Then the yazad Buzr comes up from the depths of the water Arang and arouses, upon the highest point of all that high mountain, the bird Kumrū which pecks up all those from non-Iranian lands as a bird pecks up grain.” 147 This quaint tale, for all its oddity, is basically in harmony with the general concept of Apām Napāt as one who helps to maintain the Iranian realm and to ward off the forces of disruption.

This is virtually all that is said in the Zoroastrian tradition of the “Son of the Waters”. 148 But limited though it is, it is certainly remarkable, and

134 Yt. 8.4.
135 Yt. 10.52.
136 The Pahlavi translators interpreted xklāθrim, the accusative of xklāθrya, as a form from xklāθrī “woman”, and accordingly rendered ahuram xklāθrim as kkvadhtī i midagān “lord of women” (see Bartholomae, 45r. Wh. 549), a rendering on which a good deal of emphasis was put in earlier discussions of the nature of Apām Napāt.
137 On xklāθta, “prince, king”, see most recently Brevneste, Textes et noms propres, 202-2.
138 Zādāram, III.8.
139 Yt. 1.9-95 (on which see Gershevitch, AHM, 178).
140 This narrative is interrupted in the existing redaction of the yazd by irrelevant verses (vv. 36-46), which plainly represent elaborations of the original text through its long oral transmission. Thus in vv. 36. 37 one has the logical absurdity (through the almost inevitable Zoroastrian triplication) of Khvaranah leaving Yima for a second and a third time; and this extension gave the poets scope to introduce first Taráṣšata, the hero who is regularly associated with Mithra, and then all the other heroes who usually follow Taráṣšata. V. 46 is specifically Zoroastrian.
141 The interpolation of extraneous verses has brought it about that Mithra is now separated by vv. 36-46 from fire, and the parallelism with his brother Ahura and water is thus obscured.
142 GBd. XXIV.24 (ed. TDA, 133-4, transl. BTA, 227). On this passage see Bailey, TPS 1956, 89.
143 GBd. XXVI.91 (ed. TDA, 174-5; transl. BTA, 227). On this passage see Bailey, TPS 1956, 89.
144 The older theory that Apām Napāt appears as Napāt or Nābāt in Armenia and among the Mandaeans (see J. Markwart, Wehrul und Arang, Leiden 1938, 129; Gray, Foundations, 134) must be abandoned, see K. Rudolf, Die Mandäer I, Göttingen 1900, 61.
like the cultic facts it suggests that this divinity was a once great god who
has become strangely overshadowed—for it hardly accords with the
fitness of things that a minor deity should be hailed as Ahura, the creator
of men and guardian of order, equal partner with mighty Mitra, and
linked with water as his brother Ahura is with fire. Meagre though the
material is in comparison with all that is said in the Vedas about Varuna,
it nevertheless agrees essentially with it, and the concepts of the two
Asuras, Mitra-Varuna, and the two Ahuras, Mitra-Apām Nāpāt, seem
strikingly the same: two equal gods sharing common tasks, moral deities
who are nevertheless associated with the two vital elements of fire and
water. Even the choice of words in the Avestan passage describing how
they maintain social order seems significant; for whereas Mitra "will
pacify" (rāmavehīt), Apām Nāpāt "will restrain" (nyāsātē); and to
restrain or fetter wrong-doing is, as we have seen, a characteristic activity
of Vedic Varuna’s.\(^{148}\)

On this evidence the identification of Avestan Apām Nāpāt with Vedic
Varuna might therefore seem straightforward; but there is the awkward
fact to account for that the Vedas know two deities, Varuna and Apām
Nāpāt, apparently distinct. The Vedic "Son of the Waters" is also a
perplexing figure, however, in much the same ways as his Iranian counter-
part. He too appears at first sight to be a minor deity, and only one
hymn is addressed to him in the Rigveda.\(^{147}\) Yet in this he is celebrated
in "magnificent terms",\(^{148}\) notably where it is said: "Apām Nāpāt,
the Master, has created all beings through his power as Asura" (apām nāpād
asurasāya mahānu visṇūni aryō bhūvanā jajāna).\(^{149}\) This has a striking
resemblance to what is said in the fugitive verse in Apām Nāpāt’s honour in
Yaṣṭi 19 (v. 52) that he "created men . . . shaped men." The Vedic Apām
Nāpāt is called the "urger on of horses" (āsūheman-),\(^{150}\) the Avestan one

\(^{147}\) On Varuna’s activity as "fettering" through vows see most recently Thieme, German Scholars in India 1, 343-4, 347. "The activity denoted by the term kipti ‘orderly arrangement, accomplishment, adaptation to right or normal conditions’ is as typical of Mitra as vīdēkt ‘arrangement by suppression, checking or restraining’ is of Varuna" (Gonda, The Vedic god Mitra, 97).

\(^{148}\) RV 2.35.

\(^{149}\) See A. Bergaigne, La religion védique II, 18.

\(^{150}\) RV 2.35-2.

\(^{151}\) On the horse as symbol of the water-god among the Iranians see Mackwort, Wehrt and Avang. 88. In Avestan mythology the rain-god Tīrtrya takes the shape of a horse (see further below), and the river-godess Ardvī drives four horses. In India Agni is associated in literature and cult with a horse (see e.g., Oldenberg, Rel., 75 ff.), possibly through his identification with Apām Nāpāt. On horse-sacrifice to the waters in Parthian times see Vol. II.

\(^{152}\) See those passages in the index-volume to Geldner’s translation of the Rigveda, prepared by J. Nobel, Harvard Oriental Series, Vol. 36, 36, which are listed under "Apām Nāpāt, eine besondere Form des Agni”.

\(^{153}\) Among earlier generations of Iranists there were some (e.g. C. de Harlez, Avada, civi, Darmesteter, ZA II 630 n. 82), who assumed an "igneous nature" for the Iranian god also; but the arguments, deriving partly from the supposedly "sery" character of the associated Ahuras (see F. Wuldeichmann, Zor. Studien, Berlin 1869, 185) seem insubstantial, and evolved to fit the Vedic material rather than deriving independently from the Iranian. Against them see the reasoned arguments of L. H. Gray, "The Indo-Iranian deity Apām Nāpāt" ARW III, 1900, 32-3, who based his rejection of the theory on a careful scrutiny of the relevant Avestan liturgical passages. The interpretation is nevertheless still advanced by some scholars (e.g. Widengren, Die Religionen Iran, 34-5), but with little attempt at justification.

\(^{154}\) E.g. RV 7.47.

\(^{155}\) Die Religion des Vedas, 106 ff.

\(^{156}\) For this theory see especially H. W. Magoun, "Apām Nāpāt in the Rigveda", JAOS XIX, 1898, 137-44.
earth, fires refresh the sky' [RV 1.164.51]. Further, the quenching of fire in water was evidently seen as an entering of fire into this element, and hence an abiding in it. In RV 1.65.9 it is said of Agni: "He himself, sitting there, like a Swan in the water". As a result of these speculations on natural phenomena all water was regarded as holding fire within itself. Nevertheless this is only one aspect, and a relatively minor one, of the concept of Agni. Even with regard to this god's birth, he is said to be born also of plants and stones. He is further described as living in plants and stones, beasts and men (presumably because of animal warmth), and likewise in the earth, which is said to be pregnant with Agni (doubtless because plants and rocks themselves spring from the soil). In the light of such general associations, the particular prominence given to the concept of Agni as "king amid the waters" (apsim rājā) appears to need some special explanation, even beyond the speculation which brought together the two revered elements of water and fire; and this, Oldenberg suggested, was to be found in a contamination of Agni with an original Apām Nāpāt, an Indo-Iranian "water spirit" (Wasserdamon) originally wholly distinct from him. Through this contamination the Vedic Apām Nāpāt acquired the mixed traits of a water-god and a fire-god, and Agni's connection with water was greatly emphasized and developed. In the ritual, however, the connection of Apām Nāpāt remained wholly with water, as does that of his Iranian namesake.

Oldenberg's interpretation was accepted by Gray, who supported it with citations of the Avestan evidence for the character of Apām Nāpāt; but it was later tacitly abandoned by Gray himself and seems thereafter to have been largely ignored. It appears, however, to offer a satisfactory explanation for the anomalies in the Vedic conception of Apām Nāpāt; and only one modification seems necessary, and that is to substitute great Varuna, "Child of the Waters" (apām šīṣur), for the unknown "water-spirit" of Oldenberg's hypothesis. There are at least two Rigvedic verses which directly support this interpretation. Both occur in hymns concerned with the equation, so common in the Vedas, of Agni with other gods, equations which relate to his various stages of life or his manifold functions. In the first hymn it is said: "You, Agni, are Varuna when you are born. You are Mitra when kindled. In you, Son of Strength, are all gods" (RV 5.3.1). The first words imply that it is in the moment of being "born" that Agni is Varuna. When from the "water" i.e. the wooden sticks, he passes into blazing fire, he "becomes" Mitra. In the other hymn the following verse occurs: "You become the eye and protector of great pta—you become Varuna, since you enter on behalf of pta. You become 'Son of the Waters', O Jātavedas" (RV 10.8.5). Here the names Varuna and Apām Nāpāt appear to be used in apposition within the verse as two terms representing the one god, with whom Agni is equated. That the identification of Agni with Apām Nāpāt is only occasional is further demonstrated by the fact that in at least one Rigvedic hymn the god Sāvitr is also called Apām Nāpāt. This was because Sāvitr was linked with the sun, and the belief was that when the sun set it sank down into the seas that lie beneath the earth, and so it could be said: "When the [sun] sinks in the water, it becomes Varuna", or, in other terms, Sāvitr becomes Apām Nāpāt. As Agni, daily born of water, daily "becomes Varuna", so Sāvitr, nightly descending into it, is in his turn identified with the god "dwelling in the water"; the mighty Asura.

One characteristic of a water-god which Varuna as Varuna retained for himself was the beneficial activity of dispensing rain. This, as we have seen, was also a characteristic function of the Iranian Apām Nāpāt. Later development of the concept of Varuna appears to have been exclusively on these naturalistic lines. In post-Vedic India he became "God of the Water, God of the Sea, an Indian Neptune". Similarly in Iran Apām Nāpāt came to be invoked so largely in connection with the waters that Cumont identified him with the Oceanus of the Mithraic monuments.

Although on the present evidence there seems no possibility of final

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157 Oldenberg, op. cit., 113-4 (with translation of the Vedic verse according to Geldner).
158 Translation according to Geldner; cited by Oldenberg, op. cit., 114.
159 See Oldenberg, op. cit., 120. For references to the Vedic passages see the index volume to Geldner's translation, pp. 13-16.
160 RV 10.45-5.
162 See A. Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 129; Keith, Rel. and phil. I, 135.
163 ARB III, 1900, 18-51.
164 See his Foundations, 133-6.
165 Gonda, Rel. Indicae 1, 99, suggested that the association of fire and water was that of a male principle (fire) and a female one, into which the male entered to be born from it; and so the water-spirit, Apām Nāpāt, came to be equated with the "Urform" of Agni. For a survey of yet other interpretations of Apām Nāpāt see Hillebrandt, Vedic Mythologie I, 439-57. (This scholar himself sought to identify the god with the moon.)
166 FS 10.7 (see Lüders, Varuna, 50-1).

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158 See especially pp. 107-8. See Thiele, Mitra and Aryaman, 84.
161 RV 1.22.6; cf. 10.149.2 (where the vocative Apām Nāpāt may also be addressed to Savitr, if not to Varuna as Apām Nāpāt).
169 KB 18.9 (see Lüders, Varuna, 46; Kuiper, III VIII, 1964, 107 with n. 56).
170 Mh. 1.225.1 (see Lüders, Varuna, 41). Lüders pressed the association of Varuna with the waters to the point where he explained the fact that he has his dwelling also in the heavens as due to the existence of "heavenly waters"; but against this see K. Hoffmann, OLZ XLIX 9/10, 1954, 399-95 and especially 394.
171 Lüders, Varuna, I, 9.
172 Cumont, TM MM I, 142.
proof, yet the Vedic and Avestan data taken together most strongly sug-
ggest that in Indo-Iranian times the name Apām Nāpāt, “Son of the
Waters”, was simply an appellation of Varuna, as lord of the oath; and
this being so, it removes the only serious obstacle to regarding the Iranian
Apām Nāpāt as Ahura *Vōruna, worshipped by this ancient appellation.
What makes this interpretation almost certain is that through it an
identical structure is established in the relationships of the great “Lords”
of the Vedic and Avestan pantheons, with similar functions being per-
formed by each. In both the Lord Wisdom is the highest of the three gods,
solely and very powerful, and not, it seems, circumscribed through being
associated with any natural phenomenon or particular range of activity.
His māya, apparently, was strong enough to encompass all beneficent
workings; and beneath him, fulfilling his hekasts, were the mighty pair
of equal power, Mithra/Mitra and *Vōruna Apām Nāpāt/Varunā Apām
Nāpāt.

In Rigvedic times, it seems, Asura *Medhā had already begun to recede
into neglect and oblivion, to be followed in due course by the other two
Asuras; but the Zoroastrians venerate all three divinities still today, with
relatively little change in the fundamental pattern of their concepts.
*Vōruna appears, however, to have suffered a greater eclipse through
Zoroaster’s reform than did his brother Ahura, Mithra. It would be easy
to suppose that this came about through Mithra having already in pagan
times become the dominant one of the pair in Iran (through a development
opposite to that which took place in India); but in fact there is
evidence to suggest that *Vōruna had an exalted place in the ancient
Iranian pantheon, not unlike that held by Varunā in India. Thus, although
it is at first sight surprising, it seems that when the pagan Iranians spoke
of “the Ahura” they meant not Ahura Mazdā, but *Vōruna. The evi-
dence is as follows: Mazdā is seldom invoked without the title Ahura, and
never, as far as can be established, as “Ahura” alone; even in Zoroaster’s
Gaithās, where title and name are still separate, the prophet never uses
the proper name without the title following, at least within the same
hymn;174 and among the Persians the two elements had actually been
fused by the 5th century B.C. to form a single name: A(h)uramazda. This
occurs compounded with that of Mithra to form a man’s proper name, at-
tested both (it seems) in an Old Persian form preserved by Plutarch,
Mesoromasdes,175 and as Sasanian Mihrohrmazd,176 There is another
similar name, Māhohrmazd;177 and it seems probable that both were
ancient compounds, formed already in pagan times and continuing in use
de spite possible theological objections (for an old grammatical rule, that
the shorter word always takes precedence in such a compound, meant that
the name of the lesser god had necessarily to stand before that of Zoro-
aster’s supreme Lord).178

It seems therefore that in pagan days Mazdā was so regularly spoken of
and invoked with his own name and the title Ahura that these became
fused together in time to form a single appellation. The only god who can
be shown to have been addressed by the title Ahura alone is *Vōruna
Apām Nāpāt, who is regularly invoked as the “High Lord”, ahura-
borszant-. This fact, coupled with the position of Mithra and Apām Nāpāt
as a pair, sharing the same functions and complementing one another,
makes it almost certain that in the ancient dvandva compound mithra
ahura borszantâ “Mithra and the high Lord”,179 the Ahura is Apām Nāpāt
(an interpretation suggested long ago by Spiegel,180 but without the
further step of identifying Apām Nāpāt as *Vōruna). In the light of this,
since the proper name Ohrmazdāt exists in Middle Iranian,181 meaning
“Created by Ahuramazda”, an *Ahuradâta should presumably be differ-
ently interpreted as “Created by the Ahura”, i.e. by *Vōruna; but the
one attestation of this name182 has now been challenged.183

A well-attested adjective ahuradâta exists, which occurs qualifying two

175 Ad principium inusitatum 3.780c (mesoromasdes), see S. Wikander, “Mithra en vieux-
the word as a dvandva compound of Mithra, in the Old Persian form Misra, with Auras-
maida. See Justi, Iranisches Namenbuch, 216. A. D. H. Bivar, Catalogue of the Western
Asiatic seals in the British Museum, Stamp-Seals II, The Sassanian dynasty, London 1969,
Pl. 9:1, and cf. the occurrence of the proper name Mithra in a Roman tessera excavated at St.
Albans in England, see H. Mattingly, Numismatic Chronicle XII, 1923, 54 ff.
176 See Justi, op. cit., 187.
177 On similar theophoric compounds where the lesser divinity’s name stands first, even
when of equal length, see Henning, BSOAS XXVIII, 1965, 290 (Palu aston, Tirsu). It
178 Y1. 10.113. 145; Ny. 1. 17. In the written Avesta the names appear separate, but as in
Vedic usage each is inflected as a dual. On Avestan dvandvad see Duchesne-Guillemin, Les
composis de l’Avesta, 44-9.
179 See his Die ariosche Periode und ihre Zustände, Leipzig 1887, 187-8.
180 Justi, op. cit., 10.
181 See Benveniste, Titres et noms propres, 93.
182 Professor W. Hinze, in a letter of July 1975, kindly informs me that the Elamite
letters u-ir-da-ad-da cannot represent A(h)uradâta, since it always renders spoken u, not
du.
nouns, *sam* "earth" and *varahagnha* "victory", a fact which has been much discussed. In Zoroastrian theology Ahura Mazda is the ultimate Creator of all things; and there is no doubt that in time the *Ahura* of this adjective came to be regarded as referring to him. The probability is, however, that originally *Vouruna* was meant, whose Indian counterpart fulfils so many acts of creation; and this indeed is in all likelihood one of the reasons for his relative eclipse in Zoroastrianism—that when Zoroaster preached that Ahura Mazda was the Creator of all things good, *Vouruna* was robbed of one of his own characteristic functions, and being so bereft survived in the main only with the limited activity of God of the Waters; whereas Mithra’s roles of judge and overseer were little affected by the new doctrines, and so his position remained virtually unaltered. That one of the creative acts of the pagan *Vouruna* was directly transferred in Zoroastrianism to Ahura Mazda is actually indicated by the Avestan texts; for Windischmann has pointed out how closely the words spoken of Apâm Napat in the ancient Yasna 19 (v. 52): “who created men, who shaped men” (*yō norūs dāta, yō norūs tataša*) are paralleled by those used of Ahura Mazda in the more recent Yasna 1.1: “who created us, who shaped (us)” (*yō nā dāta, yō tataša*). Probably, therefore, in pagan times the *Ahura*, *Vouruna*, was also hailed as creating the earth which the men formed by him trod upon, and victory by which the righteous could defend *aša*, his especial charge. The pagan Ahura Mazda was probably more remote, like the Vedic Asura; and it may well be that the adjective *mazdātā* “created by Mazda” was a specifically Zoroastian coinage, evolved to stress the creative activity of the supreme Lord, and used at first with deliberate doctrinal intent. Thus though Apâm Napat is regularly invoked in the *yasna* with the water which was his ancient habitation, the water is always described there as *mazdātā*, so that the invocation is of “the high Lord, Apâm Napat, Mazda-created Water”. Elsewhere victory is called both by its ancient fixed epithet *ahuradātā* and also, as if with a gloss, *mazdātā*: *voradrayan ahuradātām barō xavro mazdātātām*. It seems possible, too, that *mazdayasna*, “one whose worship is addressed to Mazda”[^184^], was also a Zoroastrian coinage, for it and *mazdātā* are the only words in common use which depart from what seems the traditional practice of regularly referring to Mazda with the honorific “Ahura” before his name.

A place in the Avesta where it seems possible to trace the actual transfer of worship from “the Ahura”, i.e. *Vouruna*, to Ahura Mazda is the *Yasna Haptañahātī*. It is generally agreed that this ancient text in the Gothic dialect is remarkably archaic in character, and has been only partially adapted to Zoroastrianism. It is made up of different elements, mostly in prose, which formed, it seems, a short liturgy accompanying the offerings to fire and water. In its extant form it is explicitly devoted to Ahura Mazda, but it is very possible that this is the result of revision, and that originally it was the two lesser Ahuras who were invoked, as the Lords of water and fire. Despite reheandling, some strikingly pagan touches remain. Thus Ahura Mazda is addressed as one who is “harm to him whom you may destine for harm” (*az̲iš̲ ahd̲āy māz̲āyī d̲aŋh̲ā*)[^191^]—words appropriate to either Mithra or *Vouruna*, stern administrators of the right, but discordant with the character of Ahura Mazda as preached by Zoroaster. He is likewise said to be *humδ̣y*, “possessed of good māyā”.[^192^] Even more strikingly, the Waters are called “the Ahura’s wives”, *ahurānī*,[^193^] a concept which is paralleled in the Rigveda by the idea that the Waters are the “wives” of Varuna. But there they are called *varunānī*,[^194^] which is yet another piece of evidence to show that in pagan Iran “the Ahura” meant *Vouruna* only. Nowhere else but in the *Yasna Haptañahātī* are his particular attributes as god of the Waters thus transferred to the supreme deity.

Why it should have been that in India Asura *Medhī* seems to have lost his proper name, becoming simply “the Asura”, whereas in Iran this befall *Vouruna* instead, remains obscure. The usage certainly contrasts with custom in the worship of Mithra/Mitra, for it is an explicit cultic requirement that this divinity must be addressed by his own name, if devotion to him is to be effective;[^185^] and in this again the Iranian Mithra was

[^184^]: Benveniste, *Vitra et Vṛfragna*, 47-8 saw in *ahuradātā* a direct ancient opposition to *dāvradātā*. In *AHM*, 50 Gershelitch interpreted the compound as containing “a fossilized reference to the discarded Iranian *Vouruna*” but later (*JNES XXIII*, 1904, 12 n. 1) he revised this, interpreting the Ahura here as the Vedic “Asura”, i.e. “an Indo-Iranian god whose name was Asura without further qualification”.

[^185^]: This point (of being robbed of an earlier creative function) was made concerning Apâm Napat by de Harlez, *Aesetea*, cvii.

[^191^]: Zor. Studien, 180.

[^192^]: Y. 36.1.

[^193^]: Y. 37.3.

[^194^]: See RV 2.3.22; 7.3.4.22.
fortunate, for the fact that *Vouruna was regularly addressed simply as “Ahura” must have made it easier for Zoroastrian theologians gradually to annex much of his cult to Ahura Mazda. Later the popularity of the river-goddess Ardvī Sūrā (probably due in part to her assimilation under the Achaemenians to an alien mother-goddess) seems to have driven him even as water-god still further into the background, so that although in the yasna it is always he who is invoked with “Mazda-created Water”, the specific prayer to the Waters, the Ābān Niyāyēl, came to consist almost entirely of verses from Ardvīsūr’s yāšt, and the great Ahura was no longer even mentioned there. Nevertheless, it was his part in the cult which ensured *Vouruna Aṭaṇ Napāt lasting worship by Zoroastrians. It is, moreover, probably cultic facts which brought it about that when he and Mithra are spoken of together (as in the ancient yāšt passages) it is always Mithra who stands first, for as protector of the morning watch he is regularly invoked in the liturgies before his brother Ahura, who follows him in guarding the hours after noon; and this must have set the regular pattern of their relationship. The diversity in *Vouruna’s invocation, as “Son of the Waters” and “high Lord”, together with a fairly general indifference on the part of Western scholars to Zoroastrian devotional life, have combined to obscure the fact of this relationship for alien inquirers.

In pagan times the great triad of Asuras represented, it seems, as a group the chief moral deities of the Indo-Iranians. In the case of each the ethical aspect “is decidedly prevalent and makes up the personality and typical character of the god”.186 The dignity and worth of the basic conceptions is indeed so striking that formerly some scholars felt that they were not in harmony with the apparently more primitive character of many Iranian and Vedic gods. Unsuccessful attempts were accordingly made to derive these particular deities from some alien culture, such as that of Babylonia; but their Indo-Iranian origin may be held by now to be firmly established. It has been plausibly suggested that their concept and worship evolved during the time when the Indians and Iranians, still living together as one community, under kings and possibly a high king, came to reflect more deeply upon rule and rulership, upon social and cosmic order. “The old inherited sense of a general unity, of a certain regularity in the universe, led so to speak to the concept of a set of divine laws which were under the protection of the divine rulers, just as earthly princes protected the laws which prevailed in their realms . . . Despite his position of authority, the king was bound to his own undertakings and duties; and with the transference of this state of affairs to the cosmos, the eternal law [frā] came to be conceived almost as primary”.188 The nature of the great moral Asuras “indicates necessarily a society whose constitution and laws were no longer at an entirely primitive level. The beliefs which attach to them may of course have deeper roots in an older social system, but their development bears the imprint of the further evolution of the Indo-Iranian state”.189 This development has been further defined in the following words: “In place of the old feeling of helpless dependence on natural forces it was ever increasingly the human, social and political conditions of life which furnished the prototype for the concept of dependence on higher powers; dependence on the king, on the strong warrior, on the wise priest, on the man of wealth. So instead of divinised natural phenomena there appeared [in the case of Indra] the form of the godlike hero or benefactor . . . in the case of Mitra and Varuṇa those of godlike kings and judges”.200

There can be no doubt that the heroic Indra belongs, like the three Asuras, to the common Indo-Iranian pantheon, for he appears among the daēnas in Zoroastrian tradition, that is, he was among the divine beings rejected by Zoroaster as false gods. Even in the Vedas, where Indra and Varuṇa both rule as universal kings, the opposition between them is recognised, their characters being wholly different. Both are regal; but whereas Varuṇa rules by laws, to which he demands obedience from gods and men, Indra owes his power to his own overwhelming might. He is a fighter, wielder of the thunderbolt, nurtured on the intoxicating soma, hero of many myths, violent, lavish, reckless, sensual. He is held to embody the type of the Indo-Iranian warrior, mighty in combat and in his potations, and generous to his followers with the booty gained in battle—even as Indra is held to be most bountiful to his worshippers, although demanding from them in turn ample offerings, for it is these rather than ethical actions which secure his favour. The contrast between him and Varuṇa is strikingly expressed in a Rigvedic hymn in which the two gods state in turn their different claims to greatness.201 Varuṇa declares: “Lordship belongs indeed to me, the perpetual sovereign, as all the

187 See above, pp. 4-5.
188 See KONOW, Die Indus, 18, 19.
189 Ibid., 21.
190 Oldenberg, Red., 48. This interpretation is rejected by those who, like Kuiper (II/ VIII, 1904, 106 ff.) see Varuṇa as god of the primeval waters, and accordingly immeasurably ancient.
200 RV 4, 42 (following Geldner’s translation).
mortals (acknowledge) to us. The gods obey Varuṇa's will... I, Varuṇa, am king; first for me were appointed the dignities of Asura... I let the dripping waters rise up, through ātri I uphold the sky. By ātri is the son of Aditi the lord who rules through ātri". Indra in his turn declares: "Men who ride swiftly, having good horses, call on me when surrounded in battle. I provoke strife, I the bountiful Indra. I whirl up the dust, my strength is overwhelming. All things have I done. No godlike power can check me, the unassailable. When draughts of soma, when songs have made me drunk, then both the unbouded regions grow afraid". To this Varuṇa replies serenely: "All creatures know this of you...". There is no trace here of hostility between the two gods, only a calm statement of their differences—the differences between an ethical ruler concerned to maintain right and order, and a bold warrior-chief, as amoral as an elemental force.202 For the Indians, it seems, Indra as the all-conqueror usurped the place of the Indo-Iranian god of Victory,202 known to the "Avestan" people as "Ahura-created Varəθraŋhna", and became the great champion against demons; whereas among the Iranians Victory retained his ancient place, and Indra was regarded (by Zoroaster at least) not merely as amoral but actively wicked, one who, in the words of the Rigvedic hymn, provoked strife, whirling up the dust.

It is in place of Varəθraŋhna, it is suggested, that Indra appears after Mītra and Varuṇa as one of the divider protectors of the Mitanni treaty,204 and there he is followed by Nāṣatya, who in Zoroastrianism, as Nāyhaithya, sinks with Indra to the ranks of demons. In the Vedas a dvandva-compound occurs, Indra-Nāṣatya;205 and in the Vendidad these two beings are repudiated together as Indram...Nāyhaithim.206 Between their names comes that of Saurva, the Indian Šrava, who is not mentioned in the Rigveda, but appears in later texts as equivalent of the violent and wicked Rudra.207 In the Zoroastrian tradition he is known as "the chief of dēvas...[who] works tyranny and violence, lawlessness and oppression."208

The concept of Nāṣatya seems to have undergone considerable development in India,209 and there is no Iranian material to help establish the ancient character of this god; but there was evidently an old link between him and Indra, and probably one also between him and Šrava (for Nāṣatya and Rudra are associated in the Rigveda).210 These three are the only divinities worshipped in India—and evidently also in pagan Iran—who are abjured by name as evil beings in Zoroastrianism, because, it seems, of an amoral and violent element in their characters.211

In the verses quoted above from the Rigveda Varuṇa refers to himself as "the son of Indi". There is a group of lesser divinities associated in the Vedic Mitra and Varuṇa, who with them are known collectively as the "sons of Indi" or the "Ādityas". Originally, it is thought, the phrase may have meant something like the "sons of freedom" or of "guiltlessness",212 but in course of time the Indian myth-makers evolved from it a goddess Aditi. The gods who make up the Ādityas are nowhere systematically listed, and their number varies in different texts, being given as six, seven, eight and in later sources even twelve. In general the lesser Ādityas are, like Mitra and Varuṇa themselves, the personifications of abstractions; and two of the most prominent among them, Aryaman and Bhaga, likewise have Avestan counterparts,airyaman and Baga, who also seem to have had a close association with the Iranian Šhuravas.

The Vedic Aryaman is particularly linked with Mitra, and indeed twice appears in a dvandva compound with him, as Mitra-Aryaman.213 A neater noun, aryaman, exists in the Rigveda meaning, it seems, "hospitality", or "friendship towards a guest", together with a masculine one signifying "friend to a guest", or "friend in general.214 In the Gāthās the parallel airyanman occurs as a synonym of hāši (Sanskrit sakhi-, Lat. socius) "com-

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202 For an admirable exposition of Indra's character in detail see Lommel, Der arische Kriegtgot, Frankfurt 1939.
203 See Thieme, J.AOS LXXX, 1960, 311-14, and further below.
204 See Thieme, ibid.
205 RV 8.26.8, cited by Thieme, art. cit., 315.
206 Yd. 10.9.
207 See Thieme, loc. cit.
208 Gbd. XXVII, 7 (BIA, 235). For other references to Saurva in the Avesta and Pahlavi texts see Gray, Foundations, 182.
209 Thus although the Rigveda knows a single Nāṣatya (see Thieme, ibid.), the common
panion, friend". With reference to a social group this word seems to describe the members of the tribe or district—a larger community, that is, than the family or village, comprising those with whom one stands in a friendly relationship established through hospitality exchanged, or from whom hospitality may properly be looked for. The basic concepts of loyalty to an obligation formally entered into, and loyalty to the especial obligations between host and guest, are plainly close. "As protector of the contract Mitra can also be considered as protector of friendship to a guest. He coincides then to a certain extent with Aryaman. More exactly: Aryaman can be thought of as a separate hypostasis of Mitra's". The lesser god never became associated with any natural phenomenon, and no myths attached to his name; but in the later Veda he is to be found decked out with traits borrowed from Indra, in order to enrich his concept as he is summoned to the sacrifice.

Aryaman is by no means prominent in the Avesta; but one of the great prayers of Zoroastrianism, composed in the Gnostic dialect, is an invocation of him as "Desirable Aryaman" (called from its first words the *Airyśāmā ḳīyō*). This prayer has its place in the *yasnā*, and is exalted in *Yād 3* as the greatest of *mahtras* against sickness. It has been so used down the centuries, for Aryaman, perhaps as the "friend" of humanity, is held to be able to heal any of the 99,999 illnesses which can plague mankind. His prayer forms part also of the Zoroastrian wedding ceremony, when guests are entertained in friendship and hospitality. Similarly in the Rigveda Aryaman is invoked for the welcome which a suitor hopes to receive at his bride's house, a bride at her new home. The Iranian Aryaman plays a part also, according to Zoroastrian doctrine, in the future restoration of the world. The Saosyants, the Saviours, will themselves recite the *Airyśāmā ḳīyō* presumably to invoke the divinity's help in their great task of healing the world from evil; and it is he who, with *Ātār*, will melt the metal for the last great ordeal to separate the guilty and innocent on Judgment Day. In this there may be a trace of the old link between Aryaman and Mitra, for such an oreld properly belongs, as we have seen, to Mitra, Judge of Creation and Lord of Fire. The popularity of Aryaman's cult never waned in Iran, and when in the 3rd century A.C. Manichaean missionaries translated their own scriptures into Persian, the divinity with whom they identified Jesus, the saviour and physician of souls, was Aryaman, the friend and healer, so that they presented him to the Iranians as Aryaman *Yīsō* (being perhaps influenced also in this by the rough word-play on *Yīsō* and *īsdō*).

With Vedic Aryaman is invoked another of the Adityas, Bhaga, the personification, it seems, of prosperity and happiness. The common noun *bhagā* means "portion, share", i.e. of the good things of this world, hence "luck". Bhaga, like Aryaman, is associated with marriage, and this has been explained on the grounds that in ancient communities marriages were primarily made so that prosperity should come through children to help in the work, thus bringing incidentally happiness. Marriage in old societies was also commonly arranged as a means of establishing or strengthening friendship between families or groups, and has a strong contractual element. (As we have seen, the *mithra* between husband and wife is explicitly mentioned in the Avesta.) Bhaga is therefore also associated with Mitra, and has a social and to some extent a moral character. His Iranian counterpart, Baga, does not appear anywhere in the Avesta; but he is frequently honoured in early Old Persian nomenclature, which appears still to reflect the usages of Iranian paganism.

Baga and Mitra are moreover set together in the Eastern Iranian proper name *Bagamibhr* (attested as Vakamibhira at Mathurā); and in a Sogdian wedding contract the bridegroom is required to swear a solemn oath "by Baga and by Mitra". The Sogdian word for wedding itself, Baghānī-

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218 See Benveniste, *Les magies dans l'ancien Iran*, 10-11. Thieme holds that in Indian tradition three kinds of friend are to be distinguished: *mend* "friend by covenant"; *aryamān* "friend by hospitality"; and *sabhā* "friend by liking" (op. cit., 104 ff.).


221 Thieme, *Fremdling*, 143.


223 Y. 54.1.

224 For the Avestan eulogy of this prayer see Darmesteter, *ZA* III, 4.5.

225 See *Vd.* XXIII.


227 See the Avestan fragment apud Darmesteter, loc. cit., and below, p. 261.
whose

IF Waters, we archaic character of have been celebrated in Baga’s honour in the east, as the *Bagakāna. Since Baga thus appears to have been much revered by the pagan Iranians, his absence from the Zoroastrian pantheon is perplexing, the more so he seems to have been closely linked to the Ahuric Mithra, as the Vedic Bhaga was to Mitra. It seems just possible, however, that the identity of his name with the common noun baga, used generally to designate the pagan Iranian gods, may have brought about his eclipse within Zoroastrianism—that he was an incidental victim of the prophet’s struggle to end the worship of all divine beings indiscriminately.

Among the lesser Ādityas of the Veda are Āmsā “Share” and Dākṣa “Dexterity”. A host of such minor divinities, the personifications of abstracts, appear in the religious literatures of the Indians and Iranians, some of them ethical in character, others (like Āmsā and Dākṣa) representing qualities or things which are morally neutral. Only a few of these beings are found in both traditions, which shows that the deification of such concepts continued as part of the living religious tradition of both peoples, long after their ways had separated. The religious intent behind such personifications appears to have been to obtain through the god thus worshipped the thing which he represented—whether this was the noble virtue of loyalty or the practical attainment of skill. The multiplication of minor gods may have been stimulated moreover by the fact that, as we have seen, Indo-Iranian deities are never invoked alone, but always in association. This must have encouraged the invocation with a great god of lesser, supporting divinities who might represent some aspect of his own character or personify some quality or thing within his gift. Thus in the archaic Yasna Haplanāhāiti (in a section probably originally devoted, as we have seen, largely to *Vouruna) the Ahura is invoked not only with the Waters, his “wives”, but also with a group of divinities who appear, with the fructifying waters, to represent the sustaining, fecund aspect of creation. They are Asī (Reward), Isī (Prosperity), Āṣūritī (Fatness or Plenty) Frasasti (Satisfaction) and Pārṇdī (Nourishment).

Several of the words thus personified have, as well as their general meanings, particular associations with sacrifice and worship. Of these five beings only the last named, who is familiar also from the Younger Avesta, appears likewise in the Vedas, as the goddess Purandhī; and only the first, Āsi (who is capable of moral development) is invoked by Zoroaster in the Gaḥās. There, however, the prophet is most deeply concerned with Ahura Mazdā himself and the divine beings of his own revelation; and it is rather in the *Mithr Yāšt that those gods appear who may be supposed to have had links with the Ahuras in pagan times. Few of these, however, have Vedic counterparts, and it is therefore not certain that all are pre-Zoroastrian. In place of the lesser Ādityas of India a group of other “abstract” deities stand close to Iranian Mithra. One who is still of great importance in Zoroastrianism is the goddess Arštāt “Justice”—a fitting companion to the protector of covenants. She is frequently invoked in the Zoroastrian liturgy with Mithra and with Rašnu, the “Judge”, who appears to be the hypostasis of the idea embodied in the common noun rašnu “judging, one who judges”. His name is linked with Mithra’s in the Sogdian proper name “Rašnumit” (rāśnumit) and he is honoured in Old Persian nomenclature of the turn of the 6th/5th centuries B.C., at a time when Zoroastrian influences are not clearly apparent in the giving of names in Pars. It is probable, therefore, that Rašnu was a deity of the pagan period, who evolved in association with Mithra’s cult. With Arštāt he represents the Ahura’s judicial aspect. Mithra’s warlike one appears embodied in another of his associates, Ḥaqm. varatī, “Valour” whose name is perhaps also to be found among Old Persian proper names at an early date, and his connection with the sun on its daily course brings into Mithra’s entourage Thvāsa, the divinised “Firmament”. Since these divine beings are all honoured with Mithra in his own yāšt, their association may well be old. It is noteworthy that it forms a pattern not unlike that of the relation of the six great Āmaš Spantas of Zoroastrianism with Ahura Mazdā, in that these lesser gods are divinised aspects of Mithra’s own being, or personify phenomena associated with him, and yet at the

233 Henning, art. cit., 247.
234 See ibid., 250, with references.
237 See Humbach, art. cit., 50-1.
238 See Bailey, JPS 1960, 83 n. 1.
239 See ibid., 83-6, with the intro. to the 2nd ed. of Zor. Problems xxx-xxxi.
240 For references see Gray, Foundations, 155-56.
242 See Gershevitch, AHM, 280-7.
243 Ibid., 281.
245 See Benveniste, Titres et noms propres, 91 (*Rašnakāda and *Rašnakāh).
246 See Gershevitch, AHM, 162.
247 See Benveniste, op. cit., 90 (Nariyamartī for *Nāriyā Hām, varatī “Manly Valour”).
248 See Zachner, Zurvan, 89; Gershevitch, AHM, 215.
same time are independent deities, to be hailed and worshipped in their own right.

In the Zoroastrian liturgy Mithra is regularly invoked with Rāman khaśastra “Peace possessing good pastures”. Darmesteter pointed out that this being is probably a late hypostasis of what is spoken of in Yasnā Ḥaṭpihāñštī as rāmača vāstromča “peace and pastures”, an expression conveying the idea of quiet thriving, of peace with security; and he suggested that the divinity thus evolved was brought into close connection with Mithra because Mithra himself, invoked as “of wide pastures”, was besought for these things by his worshippers. If, as thus seems likely, the concept of Rāman developed after Zoroaster taught, this divinity should not properly be considered here. Let us turn therefore to another of Mithra’s close companions who is named in his own yaśī, the great Sraoṣa. Sraoṣa is also regularly linked with Aṣi, and like her he is mentioned in the Gāthās. Once more a precise definition of the god’s name probably eludes us. The word is evidently derived, by e-extension, from the verbal root sru “hear”; and as a common noun it appears to mean the act of hearkening to, that is, “obedience.” This rendering fits the Gothic passages where the word occurs. But there are derivatives of sraoṣa which suggest that it could also bear the sense of “discipline.” Both obedience and discipline are soldierly virtues, which might in itself help to explain Sraoṣa’s closeness to the warrior-god Mithra, from whom in fact he borrows many traits. Yet the word sraoṣa also appears, like the related sraoṣastra “recitation”, to have a connection with something said. One of the characteristic epithets of the god Sraoṣa is tanu.maghra “having the sacred word for body”; and in Zoroastrianism he is outstandingly the god of prayer, and strong therefore to protect against the powers of evil. In the Avesta he is the only divinity to have two hymns in his honour; and subsequently he became the only Zoroastrian divine being to be honoured in Muslim Persia, where he is known as Sarō, the angel who carries messages between God and men. In the Zoroastrian texts he is at times associated with Nairyo.saphta, another divinity of prayer, whose name appears to mean “of manly utterance” (cf. Vedic naraśanasa). It occurs also, as Narīśanka, in early Old Persian nomenclature. Nairyo.saphta has a curious epithet, peculiar to himself, of kḥṣāthrh.ṇapta “son of the kingdom”; and he is on occasion associated with both Mithra and *Vouruna Aṣpām Nāpāt, the upholders of human society. His chief links are, however, with fire, before which men’s prayers were said, and with Sraoṣa himself. Another of his Avestan epithets is kuraodhah “of lovely form”; and in later literature certain myths attach to him, which celebrate his beauty. No original myths are told of Sraoṣa, and this is one reason why he has been held not to have been worshipped before Zoroaster. But, as we have seen, in India the “old” god Aryan also lacks myths, and borrows picturesque traits when needed from other deities, so that this is not a cogent argument against the antiquity of a concept. A striking parallel to Sraoṣa is furnished by the Vedic Brhaspati, “Lord of Prayer”, who derives a number of epithets and traits from the warrior-god Indra. As has been observed in his respect: “Prayers and magic formulas are, together with the power of weapons, mighty disposers of battles; the priest accompanied the royal commander in the field. So there appears beside Indra, the heroic god of battles, Brhaspati, as priestly god of battles.” Brhaspati is shown in this character in the following verse (RV 10.130.4): “Fly around in your chariot, O Brhaspati, slaying the hostile, driving off enemies, shattering the host, crushing, victorious in battle, be you the helper of our chariots.” Prominent among the epithets of the Iranian Sraoṣa are “victorious” (vanaištvanī, vorotrajanī), “strong of arm” (bāzūk aojaḥ), “with mighty club” (dāršī dru). Like Brhaspati he drives his chariot to help against foes (Y.57.27-9); and he is called “heroic, swift, strong, mighty” (Y.57.11), the one “who returns victorious from every battle”, who gives protection from “the armies of the wicked who bear the banner of blood” (Y.57.12,25). It is probably, therefore, as god of prayer that Sraoṣa in his turn is so closely linked with the warrior-god Mithra. Brhaspati is worshipped as the “father of the gods” (RV 2.26.3); and Zoroaster himself, using presumably traditional terminology, calls

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249 Lit. iran. II, 188-94.
250 Y. 35.4: cf. Y.47.3.
252 See Bartholomae, Ar. Wb., 1633, bottom; Benveniste, RHR LX, 1945, 13-4: JA 1954, 304.
253 See Geller, Dia Amera Sympos, 109-11.
254 Bartholomae, Ar. Wb., 1633.
255 On this epithet see Gershevitch, AHM, 180-1.
256 Y. 57 and Yl. 11.
Sraoša “greatest of all” (*vispā.masištōm, Y. 33.5). Bṛhaspati is, however, a purely Indian divinity, Sraoša a purely Iranian one; and although their development is in many respects parallel, there is nothing to show how ancient is the worship of each.

Another of Mithra’s divine companions is the goddess Čistā, who is celebrated in the 16th yašt, and who evidently derives her name from the passive participle of a verb kace- “teach, instruct.” She is goddess of the way, the one instructed in the paths to be followed, in both the sense of the physical roads which man traverses and that of the paths of true belief. Among her epithets are “having good ways” (*hupathmanyā-), “having good paths” (*hvasyaonā-), “running well” (*huaiulačinā-) and “very straight” (*rasištā-). Čistā also gives the quality of ākšta— which appears to blend with the energy of health. She does not merely guide; she inspires with the power to continue on the way,” and is thus an admirable companion to the god of loyalty.

Čistā has no prominence in later Zoroastrianism, where she has yielded her functions to two other divinities. One is Daēnā “Religion”, who may be a purely Zoroastrian hypostasis (like the pale figure of Čisti “Doctrine”, who has a minor role in the liturgy). Daēnā took Čistā’s place as men’s moral guide, and Čistā’s hymn came to be called after her the Dēn Yašt. The second divinity is the great warrior-god Varəthrəghnə, who is celebrated in Yašt 14, and who remains a dominant figure in living Zoroastrianism. Čistā and Varəthrəghnə appear together among Mithra’s companions, and already in the Avesta they share a number of epithets. Varəthrəghnə was plainly the more powerful god, better able to protect against dangers; and today throughout the Zoroastrian community it is he who is invoked, as Bahrm, for help by travellers, and it is his hymn which is recited on their behalf.

Varəthrəghnə himself is the personification of victory. He has the power to “smite the resistance” (varə-(hi)-ōa-) and “resist the resistance” (varə-(hi)-ōa-). The divinity Varəthrəghnə is hailed, like the earth, with the epithet ahura-daṭa “created by the Ahura”, that is, by *Voura, and he accompanies *Voura’s brother Ahura, Mithra, in his daily journey across the sky to spy out good and evil, for Victory attends the Ahuras, and grants success in battle only to the righteous, the aša-渊. The false and treacherous he crushes in his wrath. As giver of victory Varəthrəghnə plainly enjoyed the greatest popularity of old, and his Yašt, though ill-preserved, contains what seem very archaic elements.

In it he is hailed as mightiest of the gods, best-armed, most fortunate; and his power and vital force are seen embodied in ten splendid incarnations: a rushing wind, a golden-horned bull, a white stallion with golden ears and muzzle, a rutting camel, a fierce boar, a youth in the flower of life, a swift bird of prey, a horned ram, a wild goat, and an armed warrior. His characteristic manifestation out of all these is that of the boar, proverbial in Iran for its courage and ferocity; and in the Mīhr Yašt he is pictured rushing along before Mithra in this shape, wild, aggressive, sharp-tusked and strong, with iron feet, iron tendons, iron jaws.

The richness of Varəthrəghnə’s concept, its unity and cohesion, and the archaic nature of the epithets with which he is hailed, strongly suggest that he is an ancient divinity, belonging in all likelihood with the Ahuras themselves to Indo-Iranian times. Yet no corresponding being is known from the Vedas. There is, however, an Avestan adjective varəthraghanā, “victorious”, which is given to several other Iranian gods.

268. *AJW, 599.
269. See Benveniste in Benveniste et Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛthrəghnə, 86-84; and for some further discussion Gershevitch, *AHM, 166-17; Nyberg, *Rel., 81-3.
271. The creation of these two goddesses is, however, fully in the old Indo-Iranian tradition of the personification of “abstracts”.
273. There is a bāy (devī) ceremony in honour of Panth Yaazad, the “God of the Way”, which since at least Sasanian times has been consecrated by the Zoroastrians with a dedication to Varəthrəghnə/Bahrm; see B. N. Dhabhar, *Zand-i Khwāzīk Avisūk, text pp. 133-4 (§ 44-45), transl. (with notes) pp. 231-2. Further on Bahrm as protector of travellers see *The Persian Parsāik-Nāme. . . of Dastur Dārūkh Pāhām, ed. J. J. Modi, Bombay 1924, text 21, transl. 31. The Parsi pilgrim fathers prayed to Bahrm on their storm-tossed voyage to Gujarat (see Vol. III); and in Yazd in 1964 the writer heard the Bahrm Yašt recited daily by a priest on behalf of a prominent member of the community who was travelling to Bombay. On shrines to Varəthrəghnə/Bahrm as the travellers’ god see below, Vol. II and IV.

266. See Spiegel, *EA II, 100, *Vṛtra in the sense of “shield” occurs in Avstem, and there is a cognate form in Onsetic, see Bartholomae, *AJW, 142; Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit., 13, Bailey, *JRAS 1953, 110-6; against Gershevitch’s attempt (*AHM, 158-63) to establish the existence of an Avestan homonym *vərəthra “valour” see Thiene, *loc. cit., 313 n. 25.
277. Yf. 1.41. et passim.
278. See above, pp. 49-50.
279. Yf. 1.10-70.
281. On his epithets in general, and their archaic character, see Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit., 29-30, 41.
282. Yf. 14.2-27; on which see in detail ibid., 33-6.
283. Yf. 14.47, see Gershevitch, *AHM, 219. Although Varəthrəghnə is typically represented as a boar, it is hardly justifiable to regard every poetic simile or heraldic badge with the boar as referring to this god. Thus the minstrel of the Medean Astryages is said to have described Cyrus the Persian allegorically as “a mighty beast...let loose in the swamp, bolder than a wild boar”; but to take this, as is generally done, as a reference to Varəthrəghnə seems decidedly forced (see Boyce, *JRAS 1957, 20 n. 1).
284. This is convincingly argued by Thiene, *loc. cit.
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(56) THE female Other and detailed 107; 20 ment follows "Vrtrahna," the second element being taken by them for a proper name; and from this was evolved, it seems, the myth of Vṛtra, a huge dragon which tried to withhold the life-giving rain-waters from the world, but was killed by the heroic god. 279 This myth appears to be a relatively late development which took place among the Indians alone, being born of priestly lucraborations and forming part of a process by which "Indra the victorious," complex, swashbuckling, a god of warriors, came to usurp the place of Victory himself. 280 The evidence of the Mitanni treaty (in which Indra follows Mitra and Varuṇa, in the place where one might expect *Vyṛtram)

278 That this adjective should be clearly distinguished from the abstract noun which yielded the god's own name was first clearly stated by Thieme, ibid.

279 See Spiegel, ED II, 100, and in detail Benveniste-Renou, op. cit. This explanation for the genesis of Vṛtra has not been accepted by all scholars. See, at length, Lommel, Der arische Kriegsgott, 46-76; and also, e.g., A. B. Keith, "Indra and Vṛtra," Indian Culture I, 1924, 406-7; F. B. J. Kuiper, II, 1939, 214. Recently H. W. Bailey, Milhais Studies I, ed. Hinnells, 16, interpreted vṛtra as meaning the "strong one", and hence as the proper name of the monster of Vedic myth. "From this conflict the Avestan abstract vaštārhâna 'the defeat of the strong one' received the general meaning 'victory.' Other scholars have tried to establish that a myth of dragon-slaying attached of old to the Iranian Varoahagna also, but no such myth is ever faintly alluded to in the Avesta. In Armenia "Vahagn" kills a monster, but the tale has little in common with the Vedic one of Vṛtra, and appears to be a late local development, see Benveniste, Histoire de la langue osšté, 84-6; Duchesne-Guillemin, La religion, 178. On the Sogdian Manichaean use of the name "Vahagn" see Benveniste-Renou, loc. cit. A late Pahlavi text contains a curious legend that "Vahrana" was elevated by Ohrmazd to be the seventh Armanaspand, because he and he alone could overcome Ahura and bind him in hell. J. de Menasse ("La promotion de Vahrâm", RHR CXXXII, 1948, 5-18) suggested that this might be a development of the putatively ancient myth of Varroahagna's defeat of Vṛtra; but it seems a natural fact to assign in apophatic text to the ever-popular god of Victory, without there existing any such antecedent in Iran. Against Damé relief's attempt (Milange H. Grousset, Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire orientale de Bruxelles IX, 1949, 223-5) to identify the Onomasticon of Eltihan with Varoahagna, see Varroahagna, Etudes sur la langue osšté, 130. On the theory that the myth of Indra's defeat of "Vṛtra" was modelled on that of Treta Āptya's of the dragon Viśvâraṇa see Ch. 3, below. In general on tales of dragon-killings by gods and Iranian heroes see Benveniste-Renou, op. cit. 185.

280 Some of those who hold that the monster Vṛtra was a primary concept argue conversely that the Varroahagna worshipped in Iran was the Indo-Iranian Indra. Apart from the apophatic text it to assume that the Zoroastrians both rejected and execrated Indra as a devata, and at the same time venerated him by a different name as one of their greatest and most beloved gods. Such a development may not perhaps be impossible, but it is certainly in the highest degree improbable, and the hypothesis would need very strong evidence to establish it. It cannot be said that such evidence has yet been adduced.—One slight argument in favour of the identification has been that Indra also appears in a series of ten incarnations; but this can be interpreted as a delusion by him to the Indo-Iranian Vṛtragha. Only one of these incarnations coincides with one of the Iranian god's, see Duchesne-Guillemin, La religion, 177.
abundance, was also a goddess of fertility, and that she abhorred the immature as she did the barren—an abhorrence justified in this myth through her betrayal by children. The pagan concept of Aşī as Fortune, most generous to those in whose house she, “the giver of prosperity, sets her feet”, is admirably conveyed in verses 6-14 of her yašī, verses which express a “free and sober recognition of the values of the good things of this world and... frank pleasure in...earthly riches...a world of which man is the centre and wherein the women, like the cattle, the gold, and the silver, minister to man’s enjoyment.”

Among the gifts bestowed on men by Aşī is khvarnah, a word itself hypostasized as an independent divinity. It used to be thought that khvarnah was a derivative of kvar (Skt. swar) “sun”, and that its primary meaning was therefore “glory, majestic splendour”. This led to a number of deductions about the “sunny” or “fiery” nature of the god Khvaranah. Bailey, however, challenged this interpretation, demonstrating that the common noun khvarnah, Pahl. khvurrah(ah), is often used simply for the tangible things which a man may obtain in this world. He suggested, therefore, that its basic meaning was probably something like “good things, which are worth pursuing”. A rendering of “(Good) Fortune” was accordingly proposed by him for the god’s name, and widely adopted. This interpretation emphasized what appears to be a basic similarity in the concepts of Khvaranah and Aşī. Barr, accepting Bailey’s general interpretation, observed: “All good things—abundance of cattle, fertility, domestic happiness—appeared to... the old Aryans...as heavenly gifts that one could not hope to obtain if one were not on good terms with God. I think that one comes nearest to the original meaning of the kharvar (kharvaru) by using a religious expression: ‘all good gifts which come from on high’. Khvarnah is an expression of the divine blessing.” Thus in pagan Iran Aşī appears to represent the good fortune which any man might experience, though luck (and due sacrifices), whereas khvarnah seems rather to be a divine grace which descended on those favoured by the gods, endowing them with exceptional power and prosperity. Again there is no one English word adequate to render the name of the divinity personifying this; and the old translation “Glory”, although based on a false etymology, still seems sometimes apt.

The great and the mighty, kings and heroes, have their fame and splendour through khvarnah; and if it leaves them, their state becomes changed, their fortune or glory departs. Khvaranah as a divinity is known as abiding only with the eminent, the leaders among men, and as an attribute it is guarded particularly by the “Lords”, the Ahuras. Of all the gods Mithra is said to be the most richly endowed with khvarnah. In all the peoples it is he who is “giver of khvarnah, giver of rule” (khvarno. dd-, khkthur. dd.-). The divinity Khvaranah is among those who drive with Mithra across the sky; and, as we have seen, Mithra and *Vouruna Aşım Napāt together play an especial part in its protection. Khvaranah was not conceived, it seems, in human shape, and its name remains neutral in gender. In the 19th yašī, which despite its dedication to the Earth largely celebrates Khvaranah, the divinity is described as having dwelt with the heroes of Iranian legend while each achieved his great or valorous deeds, passing from each in the shape of a bird when he was disgraced (like Yima), or perhaps in other cases simply when he died. It was with Zoroaster also, and with Kavi Vištąspa and with Vištąspa’s pagan forebears (dwelling briefly with their mighty foe Fraşṛasyan when he defeated Kavi Usan). As their Glory it was called the Kavyon or Kingly Glory, and became identified with the Glory of Iran, Airyam Khvaranah. Sometimes hostile forces are represented as trying to seize this. In Yašī 19, after it has left false Yima it passes into the keeping of Mithra; thereafter, fleeing from the monster Aşī Dāhāka, it is saved by Fire, and escapes to the mythical sea Vourukāsa, where it is taken hold of by *Vouruna Aşım Napāt. Thrice the warrior Fraşṛasyan plunges naked into the lake seeking to grasp it again for himself; but each time he fails to attain “the Glory which belongs to the Iranian peoples, born and to be born.”

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289 Bailey’s interpretation was radically challenged by Duchesne-Guillemin, “Le xwarrn”, AION V, 1963, 19-31, who maintained the older derivation of the word from kvar- “sun”; and saw its significance as being “not prosperity itself, but its cause”, finding its basic meaning to be a “solar fluid”, a fiery semen of life, giving growth and hence prosperity to all things. This interpretation has not, however, won any wide acceptance. On the developments of this characteristic Old Iranian term in Muslim times see R. N. Frye, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Vol., Bombay 1969, 143-4.

287 Yt. 19.35. See further Nyberg, Rel., 71-2.

289 Yt. 10.16.

290 Yt. 10.32; 66. 67. The identification made by Gershevitch in his translation of the latter verse of Khvaranah with Fire was immediately withdrawn by him, see AHM, 278-9.

300 See above, pp. 42-3.

301 On this see Darmesteter, ZA II, 615.

302 See Ch. 3 below.

303 Yt. 19.57.
escape of Khvaranah into the keeping of the Ahuras probably expresses a belief that the Glory of the Iranians might be fleetingly captured but could not be wholly lost to them, remaining in the grip of a foe. \(^{204}\) In the legendary history of Ardashir Pàpakân, the first Sasanian ruler (which perpetuates perhaps the older legend of the Achaemenian Cyrus) \(^{205}\) the Kingly Khvaranah (Pahl. khwarrah i kâyán) in the form of a great ram leaves Ardashân, the last Parthian king, and runs after Ardashir, springing finally upon his horse behind him, a sign that the sovereignty has now passed to him. \(^{206}\) Later in the story Khvaranah again appears in visible form, at a moment of great peril to Ardashir, to lead him to safety: “They tell thus, that the Kingly Glory, which had been at a distance, stood before Ardashir and kept moving step by step until Ardashir had escaped unharmed from that dangerous place and the hands of his enemies.” \(^{207}\) As long as Khvaranah remained with a mortal, no foe could overcome him.

Although in the Iranian sources Khvaranah is represented only thus, as bird or beast, a Middle Iranian form of his name, Farrah (a variant of Khvarrah) appears as ΦΑΡΡΟ in several of the Kušan coins, set under different representations of a male figure, variously garbed and accoutred. \(^{208}\) This figure is diademed and nimhate, as are those of the Kušan kings themselves. In one representation it holds sword and sceptre, in another a purse in its outstretched hand. It is plainly impossible to rely on details of the iconography of the Kušan coins; \(^{209}\) but it seems likely that these different representations have as common factor Khvaranah’s link with royalty and rule. \(^{210}\)

The gods so far considered are all “abstract” (with the exception of Thwâša “Firmament”), in that there was no natural object which one could look at and see as their regular physical embodiment; for although the association of Mithra and *Vouruna Apan Napât with fire and water evidently existed already in Indo-Iranian times, it was not an identification, nor a relation to their being. There existed, however, another group

of gods who represented physical phenomena, and who might be said actually to be those phenomena. In some of these cases the concept seems simple and direct, such as can readily be apprehended by men anywhere or at any time. One such instance is that of the sun, worshipped in Iran as Hvar (Vedic Sūrya), or Hvar Khšaēta, the “radiant Sun”; \(^{211}\) another that of the moon, Māh. Both have their Avestan yāsîs, and prayers are still directed to them in Zoroastrian observance. \(^{212}\) Both may be supposed to be ancient gods, indeed through the chance of a Babylonian record “Sūrya” is the first Indo-Iranian deity to enter history. \(^{213}\) It has been suggested \(^{214}\) that the concepts of the gods of moon and sun remained fairly undeveloped because each was so fully identified with the natural object, which could be regarded also in other ways—the sun for instance as a wheel impelled by other gods, or as the eye of heaven. The association with it of the god Mithra in particular is so close that the Zoroastrian prayer to the sun, the Khoršēd Niyaēyē, recited thrice daily in orthodox practice, is always immediately followed by the prayer to Mithra, the Mihr Niyaēyē, and may not be recited without it. \(^{215}\) and in Zoroastrian usage of the Sasanian period the sun itself could be referred to as the “god Mithra” (Mihr yazad) \(^{216}\), a practice represented in the living Persian language by the existence of the common noun mihr “sun”. The veneration of Mithra tended, therefore, to overshadow that of Hvar.

In instances where the phenomenon divinised exists not as a single natural body, but in plurality, the ancient concept is necessarily more difficult to grasp, although the scope for personification is correspondingly greater. Oldenberg has set out the problem, taking as his example the Indian Agni: “Should one express the Vedic concept of the relation of Agni to fire in this way, that this is the favoured abode and sphere of activity of this divinity, who also disposes of other abodes and spheres of activity, or is Agni’s relation to fire that of inseparable union of being? One can say that the element is the dwelling of the god, or is it the god’s body?” \(^{217}\) He goes on to point out that Agni’s name means fire; where fire is, there he is, and where there is no fire of any kind, he is hardly to be

\(^{204}\) See Lommel, Die Yādī, 174; Garbavitch, AHM, 59.

\(^{205}\) See A. v. Gutschmidt, Kleine Schriften III, 138 f.

\(^{206}\) See the Kārmanmag i Ardaliv i Fapyakhân, ed. E. K. Antia, Ch. IV, ed. D. P. Sanjana, Ch. III.


\(^{208}\) See Bailey, Zor. Problem, 64.

\(^{209}\) Pace Widengren, Rel. Iran., 334 with n. 11. The fact that on the Kušan coins a goddess is represented by a male figure, a god by a female one (see further below) shows how casually Greek prototypes were selected, on the basis in these instances of one salient feature.

\(^{210}\) See Bailey, Zor. Problem, 64-5.

\(^{211}\) On the putative existence of two Iranian words, meaning respectively “radiant, blazing” and “prince, lord”, see Bonneville, Tôres et noms propres, 20-2.

\(^{212}\) In particular the Khoršēd and Māh Niyaēyē, see M. N. Dhalla, The Nyai̓shes or Zoroastrian Litanies, Columbia 1908, 2-111.

\(^{213}\) See above, p. 14.

\(^{214}\) Konow, Die Inschr., 35.

\(^{215}\) This, known from living practice, is explicitly enjoined in, e.g., Mmāg i Khrud, I.LIII.3.

\(^{216}\) This is common practice in the Manichaean Middle Persian texts (which in such matters reflect Zoroastrian usage); and is found also occasionally in the Pahlavi texts, see, e.g., Pahl. Ptw. Dd., XLVII.2 (ed. Dahshar, 141).

\(^{217}\) Rel., 42.
found. On the other hand, the plurality of fires, being kindled, burning, dying out simultaneously in diverse places, and the variety of fire's manifestations, in sun and lightning as well as in flames on earth, prevents absolute identification. Oldenberg concludes: “Originally Agni is the element provided with a divine soul, only thereafter an ideal being who can also be conceived as detached from the element.” These remarks apply equally to the Iranian fire-god, Ārta, a masculine divinity whose name is presumably derived from an old neuter noun *ātar- “fire”, of unknown origin. Both he and Agni appear to be originally personifications of the ever-burning hearth fire, and as such they are to be found “in the dwellings of men” (vīmānāhā māyākānañ), rather than in heavenly abodes. “When [Agni] is called the messenger of the gods, when it is said that the gods have set him down in human dwellings, that they have established him for the sacrifice and given him as a reward therefor eternal youth... he appears always in a certain separation from the compact mass of the ‘gods’. Living with men in their own houses, he is friend and protector, servant and master, and potent enemy of the demons of darkness and cold. The more exalted concept of the god developed evidently through priestly speculations on the role of fire in their rituals, and on the link between fire burning here below and the sun blazing in the sky. Fire was looked on as the sun’s representative on earth; and as the sun in its rising and setting moved according to rājaśa, so fire too came to be associated with this cosmic force. In the Younger Avesta Ārta is said to have his strength through Aša, and to protect the creation of Aša; and he is regularly invoked there on the “son of Ahura Mazda”. Apart from this recurrent and profoundly respectful appellation there is little sign of his personification, and none of the rich accumulation of epithets such as are heaped upon Agni. The difference is probably due to the restraining influence exerted on myth-making by Zoroaster’s ethical teachings, whereas the Indian tendency to elaboration was especially fostered in Agni’s case by the enormous importance which the Brahmins came to attach to the ritual of sacrifice, in which for them fire had a central part.

The deification of water is even more complex than that of fire. Here also unity is broken into plurality, and into apparent diversity (from raindrops to the great ocean, from still wells to rushing streams); and in addition the element is both venerated and consumed. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that there was more than one water divinity both in India and in pagan Iran. In both lands the Waters themselves are divinised, being invoked as goddesses, the Āpās. The identification here of divinity and element is so complete that when the Vedic poet speaks of water as a wholesome drink he says that the Āpās, the goddesses, are wholesome to drink; and in a passage of YAsna 101.5 the Waters are both venerated as wives of the Ahura, and celebrated as easy to cross and good to bathe in. There is thus a distinction in this respect between the Āpās and their “husband”, Vouruna Apān Napā; for he is a god who lives in the water, but who is not, like them, identified with the element. Nevertheless so wonderful is his nature that although the ocean is not big enough to compass him, yet he may be present in the bowl of water used in an act of worship.

Another water deity who in later times over-shadowed even great Vouruna in Iran was the river goddess Ardvi Sūrā Anahītā. Sūrā is a common adjective meaning “strong, mighty”, and anahīta, “undefiled, immaculate”, is likewise an adjective. Both are used of other deities also. Only “ardvi” is special to this goddess, a word which is otherwise unknown. On etymological grounds it too is interpreted as an adjective, meaning “moist, humid”, but it was once thought that, substantivised, it formed the goddess’ name. Lommel has, however, presented a strong case for thinking that ardvi too is properly no more than an attribute. The original name of the Indo-Iranian goddess, he suggested, was Sarasvatī “She who possesses waters’. In India she continued to be worshipped by this name, which she gave there to a small but very holy river in Mahāyad-eša (the Punjab); whereas in Iran Sarasvatī became, by normal sound-changes, Harahvaiti, a name preserved in the region called in Avestan Harakhvaiti, and known to the Greeks as Arachosia—a region rich in

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318 Ibid., 45.
319 See Thieme in Zarathustra, ed. Scherath, 407. Although the etymology of the word is unknown, and it is a problem why it should be used in Iranian, rather than a derivative of the well-known Indo-European one represented by Skt. āgni- (Lat. ignis etc.), nevertheless it hardly seems likely that, as some have supposed (e.g., Wickander, Des arischen Männerrund, 75-7; Feuerpriester in Kleinaisien und Iran, 101 f.), Zoroaster in this one instance deliberately replaced a traditional expression by an unfamiliar one, in an attempt to break away from ancient associations; for in all other instances the prophet appears content to use old vocabulary and concepts to convey new doctrines. Such a hypothesis leaves the origin of the word in any case unexplained.
320 Ātaš Niyāyēd, 7.
321 Oldenberg, Roj., 105.
322 See Oldenberg, Roj., 45.
323 See Lüders, Varama I, 48.
324 See Bartolomae, Anw. Wb. 194-5.
rivers and lakes. Originally, *Harahvatī was the personification of the great mythical river which flows down from high Harā into the sea Vourukāsha, and is the source of all the waters of the world; and just as the wandering Iranians called great mountains near which they lived Harā, and broad lakes Vourukāsha, so, it seems, they gave *Harahvatī's name to life-giving rivers; and their Indian cousins did the same. It sometimes happens, however, that a divinity's name is gradually forgotten in favour of an attribute (thus in India the goddess Earth was regularly invoked as Prthivī, the "Broad One"); and so, it seems, *Harahvatī's own name came to be eclipsed by her attributes aradvī and sūrā, which in later times coalesced to give her the new name of Ardivisū. The third epithet, anahiti, was possibly added to the other two in fixed conjunction in order to help the identification, in Achaemenian times, of the Iranian river goddess *Harahvatī aradvī sūrā with the alien fertility goddess Anaitis; but this is a matter which must be considered in a later volume.

The Avestan hymn to Aradvī Sūrā is one of the longest and apparently most ancient of the yašt. In it the goddess is described as a beautiful strong maiden, clad in beaver skins, who drives a chariot drawn by four horses—wind (vāyu), rain, cloud and sleet. As one of the divinities who bring water she is worshipped as goddess of fertility, who purifies the seed of all males, the wombs of all females, and makes the milk flow which nourishes the young. Like the Indian Sarasvatī, she nurtures crops and herds; but it seems less characteristic of a river goddess that Aradvī also bestows rich material possessions—horses and chariots, arms and household goods—and that warriors pray to her to grant them victory in battle and the destruction of foes. Some of the verses describing these aspects of her power correspond closely to verses addressed to Aši, goddess of Fortune; and it seems some blurring of identity took place between these two bountiful, chariot-driving goddesses. Linguistically Aradvī Sūrā's yašt appears older than Aši's, and so it has been assumed that where the two divinities have invocations in common, Aši was the borrower.

In an oral literature such criteria cannot be relied upon, however. Once Aradvī Sūrā gained greater popularity, her hymn would have been more often recited, and so would be better preserved and have in the end the appearance of greater antiquity. "Great-gifted" Aši is herself a Gāthic figure, worshipped of old; and probably what happened was that as she suffered gradual eclipse by Aradvī, verses once addressed to her came to be uttered also in her rival's honour—Aradvī being in fact the debtor.

Some other verses in Yašt 5, which have masculine instead of feminine pronouns, appear to have been adapted to the worship of the goddess from hymns to other divinities, such as that to Tīstrya, or possibly even a lost hymn to *Vouruna Aṃap Naṣat. Much of Aradvī's hymn is, however, unquestionably proper to her and to her alone; and in these verses there is constant blending of the worshippers' apprehension of the thing personified and of the personifying divinity. Aradvī is hailed as a goddess, worthy of worship, bountiful to those who please her, stern towards those who do not, one who dwells in stately palaces, but she is also the mythical river itself, "as great in bigness as all these waters which flow forth upon the earth". As a goddess, she is essentially a goddess of the waters, and like the Indian Sarasvatī she is invoked with the Āpas, and in later times her hymn is simply called the "Hymn to the Waters", Abān Yašt. There is an ancient intimate link between water and wisdom; and priests and their pupils pray to Aradvī for wisdom and knowledge, while Sarasvatī protects the study of the Vedas. Wisdom is also, as we have seen, an attribute of the Indian Varuṇa, god of the waters, and of "the Ahura" (i.e. *Vouruna) in Iran; and in the Pahlavi rendering of the Vahman Yašt Zoroaster is himself represented as receiving from Ahura Mazdā "the wisdom of all-knowledge in the form of water" (khruad i harwisp-agāhī šād āb-kirih).

That the river Aradvī sprang from the summit of Harā was, it seems, generally known to the goddess' devotees, and not merely a matter of...
priestly learning. It remained, moreover, a part of her living cult for many generations, if a Greek inscription discovered in Asia Minor from Roman times has been rightly interpreted, for this appears to be dedicated to "the great goddess Anaktis of high Harā" (Bezpoyapai). From this mythical mountain Aravī flows down upon the sea Vourukāša, and other rivers carry her waters thence over all the lands. Rain, too, has its source in Vourukāša, from which it is released each year by Tístrā, god of the rain-star. He, it seems, is another Indo-Iranian divinity, whose name appears in the Vedas as Tisya; and the star which he personifies is usually identified as Sūris or Canis Major (although the problem of connecting the rising of the dog-star with a rainy season for the Indo-Iranians at any period has proved a difficult one). To win the rain water from Vourukāša Tístrā has to struggle annually with the evil forces which oppose him. There is the witch Dūzyāryā "Bad Harvest", whom he must bind "with twofold bonds and threelfold bonds... as if a thousand men were to bind one man", but his fiercest foe is Apaśa, "Dearth". Each year god and demon meet in the shape of horses on the shores of the lake. Tístrā is white, beautiful, with golden ears and muzzle, Apaśa black, hairless and hideous. At first the demon drives Tístrā back from the shore, but finally the god, strengthened by men's prayers, defeats his foe, and rushes into the waves. "He goes to all the bays of the sea Vourukāša, the mighty, beautiful, deep, and to all the beautiful tributaries and all the beautiful outlets, in the shape of a... horse. Then the waters flow down... from the sea Vourukāša." Elsewhere, as we have seen, the Waters are themselves personified as horses, driven by Apaśa Napāt; and Lommel has suggested that Tístrā's is an old nature-myth, in which the rival stallions, god and demon, fight, and the victor goes to the Waters who desire him, and begets rain. "Then Tístrā rises again from the sea Vourukāša...

and the bold... wind (vāta-) drives the rain and cloud upon places, upon dwellings, upon the seven climes". One of the epithets particular to Tístrā in the Avesta is khšnuvi-vāza, "swift-flying", and twice in his yašt his going to the waters is compared, in its speed and directness, with the arrow shot by Frākhša, the "best archer among the Iranians" (who in legend is held to have established the border of Iran by a stupendous bow-shot, which he died in making). It used to be thought that it was this simile which provided grounds for the later identification of Tístrā with Tiri, a divinity unknown to the Avesta, for his name came to be reduced to Tir, and the Old Iranian word for "arrow", tīgra, also developed into ird. It is now known, however, that this word was still pronounced as tīgr down to at least the 3rd century A.C., and long before this Tiri appears (as TEIPO) on Kūšan coins where, although male, he is represented as Artemis with bow and quiver. Moreover, in Iranian tradition his festival, Tirāṅga, was regarded as celebrating Frākhša's great arrow-shot, a tradition which probably goes back to Parthian times. It seems, therefore, that the association with arrows was proper rather to Tístrā, because of the ancient simile in his yašt, and was acquired by Tiri through his identification with the Avestan divinity, the fact that his name later became synonymous with the Persian word for "arrow" being accidental.

The festival of Tirāṅga, one of the greatest holy days of ancient Iran, is essentially a rain-festival, and though it is named for Tiri, the religious services solemnisied on that day in Zoroastrian observance are all dedicated, in their Avestan liturgies, to the rain-god Tístrā. However, in the Middle Persian preliminaries to these liturgies, which are always recited before the Avestan words, the dedication (khšnuvišn) is made to Šestar-Tir, ṭūyomān, khvārōmand "Šestar-Tir, the splendid, the glorious". Further, although Tiri is unknown in the Avesta, yet in the Zoroastrian calendar both the fourth month of the year is named for him, and the thirteenth day of the month. Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian services...
solicited on each thirteenth day are dedicated in Avestan to Tīstṛya, and in Middle Persian to Tēṣṭār-Tīr together. Moreover, every nīyavēc or yašt recited on that day ends with the Middle Persian words: rōz nēk nam, rōz pāh nam, rōz mubārak, rōz Tēṣṭār-Tīr yazad “day of fair fame, day of pure fame, auspicious day, day of Tēṣṭār-Tīr Yazad”. These formulas suggest a complete identification by the Middle Iranian period of Tīr with the Avestan Tīstṛya. Yet the Irani Zoroastrians today know the ancient festival of Tīragān as “the feast of Tīr and Tēṣṭār” (jāšan-i Tīr u Tēṣṭār); and they also have shrines dedicated to “Tīr and Tēṣṭār”, the shorter name coming first, in contrast to the liturgical order. These popular usages point to an association between these two divine beings rather than their identification. However, a Pahlavi text states simply that “Tīr is Tēṣṭār”, which supports the liturgical evidence; and this is further confirmed by a piece of ritual which takes place during a drōn service in honour of the star-yazad Vanant, as it is solemnized among the Parsees. In this the drōn itself is cut into four pieces, assigned respectively to Vanant and his three associates, namely Tēṣṭār-Tīr, Sadvēs and Haftōrīng. It may be, therefore, that at some point theologians declared the identity of the two divine beings, but that the laity proved less malleable than the priesthood.

One of the striking facts about Tīstṛya and Tīr is that their names, although both well attested, never occur together in any ancient source or setting. Tīr’s is altogether unknown in the Avesta (unless one regards the proper name Tīrō-nakathwa, of doubtful interpretation, as compounded with his), whereas Tīstṛya’s role there and in the Zoroastrian cult is considerable (for he not only has his own yašt, but is venerated in the Khurštēd Nīyavēc, which is recited thrice daily). On the other hand, no proper names are known which are formed with Tīstṛya’s, whereas there are a number, from early Achaemenian, Parthian and Sassanian times, with Tīr- or Tīr- as their first element.265 In the Parthian

259. [Nyberg, in throwing doubt on Henning’s reading of the name trypy (see his article in Festskrift C. Kempe, p. 739) overlooked the occurrence in Kharosthi of Tiravharna (see Henning, art. cit., 171 n. 2.) Tīr and Mithra are further linked by being the only two gods to enjoy the epithet “possessing swift arrows” (khuvi.iiu).

260. See further in Vol. II.

261. See Eilers, Semiramis, 44 n. 75. As for the name Tīstṛya, Porsenske seeks to explain this (art. cit., 59-60), as derived from tīr “three” and star “star”, and meaning “belonging to the three stars” (a name which he suggests was given to Sirius because this star is “not too far away” from the three stars of Orion’s belt).

262. See Eilers, loc. cit. The great popularity of the cult of Tīr/Tīr in Armenia in Parthian and Sassanian times is amply attested. Nevertheless Wendgren’s identification of “Apollo and Artemis” of the temple at Armavir as Tīr and Anāhīd, rather than Mīhr and Anāhīd (Rel. Iran. 179-80) lacks proof. Mīhr was also fittingly worshipped in Zoroastrian Armenia.

256. This is the standard formula for concluding such prayers, only the yazad’s name altering with the day.

257. One exists in the village of Sharīfabad, near Yazd.

258. O. Bd. II. 198 (BTA, 43). That Tīstṛya is the protective divinity of 13th day is indicated in Supp. texts to Sndl. (ed. Kotwal) XXI-13, whereas in the next chapter of the same work, XXI-12, Tīr is explicitly named in the same connection. This see further in Vol. II.

259. See Erachji Meherji Rana, Persāt-Pахtāk (in Gujarati), p. 68, question 272. This drōn (bāj) service is still solemnised annually in Navsari on Rōz Hērma, Māh Farvardin.

260. Y. 1. 1326, see Bartholomaeus, Art. Wb. 851.

261. For examples, with references to earlier discussions, see W. B. Henning apud A. D. H. Bivar, BSOAS XXIV, 1961, 191; and add now OP Teryayadā from the Elamite tablets, see Benveniste, Tablet es noms propres, 94. Henning first interpreted the Middle Iranian name Tewisēr as meaning “(trusting in) a contract of alliance with Tīr[i]”, but later proposed more simply “given by, or devoted to) Tīr and Mīhr” see BSOAS XXVIII, 1965.

period Tīr appears on the Kušan coins in eastern Iran, but not Tīstṛya. What is still more remarkable, although Tīstṛya is celebrated in an evidently ancient yašt, he is one of the few divinities so honoured who has no day named for him; whereas, as we have seen, Tīr, who has no place in the Avesta, is prominent in the Zoroastrian calendar, with day, month and a noted festival. This can only mean that by the time the dedications of this calendar were evolved (probably in the late Achaemenian period), Tīr had come to be fully recognised and venerated by Zoroastrians. These facts all seem compatible with the theory that Tīr was a divinity first worshipped by the western Iranians, who incorporated his cult into Zoroastrianism at their conversion, associating him with Tīstṛya both because of a certain rough similarity in the names, and (presumably) because of a resemblance in their beneficent functions. No satisfactory etymology of the name Tīr has been proposed, nor any adequate explanation of a development of Tīr from Tiur. Nevertheless, it seems possible that Tīr is to be identified with the old Armenian god Tiur, who was perhaps adopted by the Armenians from the previous inhabitants of their land. If the neighbouring Medes also learnt to venerate Tiur/Tīr, it may be the Magi who brought his cult with them when they embraced Zoroastrianism.

The Avestan Tīstṛya is called “lord and overseer of all stars”;263 and as his lieutenants he has other stars “of watery nature” (afāštēhra-) to help him.264 These are Tīstṛyaēnī (Canis minor), the Paōryaēnī (the Pleiades) and the Upapaōiri, “the stars in front of the Pleiades”.265 There are also three great stars or constellations which according to the Pahlavi books share with him the rule of the heavens. Tīstṛya himself dominates the east. In the south is Satavaēsā (Antares),266 who aids him by scatter-
ing the rain-waters over the earth. The west is ruled by Vanant, the "Conqueror", who is Vega, and whose great task is to guard the "gates" in the mythical mountain in the centre of the world through which the sun passes daily. Vanant has his own short hymn, Yast 20, which is in fact a formula of exorcism; and tradition tells how in the 16th century the great Parsi priest, Meherji Rana, ended an eclipse by reciting this *Yast in the presence of the emperor Akbar. The north is dominated by Hapti-iriga (Ursa Major); and since hell is in the north, he is especially invoked against demons. All four, Tishtya, Satavasa, Vanant and Hapti-iriga, are called upon in that order in Zoroastrian observance on the day Tir of each month.

The ancient Iranians venerated the god of the sky above, Asman, and the goddess of the earth below, Zam. The link between Father Sky and Mother Earth is evidently very old; and in the Vedas the names of the two divinities Dyaus and Prthivi (originally an epithet, the "Broad One") appear in a fixed compound, although the pair no longer had an important part in the literature or religious life. The Iranian word for the sky itself, *asmân, meant simply "stone", the vault of heaven being thought of as substantial and hard, forming as it were a shell about the earth. There is no hymn to the Sky-god in the Avesta; but the 19th *Yast is dedicated to Earth, Zam (although largely concerned with Khvarnazah); and Bailey has shown that the name of this pagan goddess survives in Khotanese Saka as *ysana-*śandai or (through her epithets only) as śandramata. From these forms, used by the Buddhist Sakas for the goddess Śri, he deduced an Old Iranian *Zam śyantā ārmati, interpreted as "Bounteous beneficent Earth". Among the Sakas the goddess was evidently known also simply as *śandai, "Bounteous One," or śandramata, "Bounteous, beneficent one".

Between the solid earth beneath their feet, and what they regarded as the solid sky above, the Indo-Iranians apprehended evidently empty space, a void; and in this void there moved perceptibly from time to time the wind. We have already met two Avestan words for wind, *vāyu and *vā, both from the same verbal root *vā "blow", and used, it would seem, as synonyms. Varāthrāghna takes *vā as one of his shapes; and *vāyu is one of the four horses which draw Aradvī's chariot. Derivatives of the former word, *vā, are still in common use for "wind" in living Iranian languages; and the ancient divinity Vāta, in both the Avesta and Vedas, is god of the tangible wind that blows. Since the wind brings rain, "bold Vāta" is a helper of Tishtya and Satavasa, aiding them in drawing up the waters and scattering the clouds. On a Kušan coin he appears as OAO (i.e. Middle Iranian Vād), "a bearded god with flowing hair, holding in his hands the ends of his floating garments". His is an instance in which the identification of the god with the thing divinised is so close that translators are sometimes at a loss to know whether in a particular passage it is the god Wind or the wind itself which is spoken of.

The Vedic concept of Vāta is similar to the Iranian; but with both peoples the other wind-god, Vāyu (in Avestan Vayu) is a more complex and powerful being. In his case the natural phenomenon which was the basis of the concept has faded much more into the background; but although this is true in both countries (which suggests that Vāyu is an ancient god), there is not much else closely in common between the Indian and Iranian deities. In the Vedas Vāyu, "the soul of the gods", is often linked with Indra; and in the cult he is entitled to the first draught of soma, as "the swiftest of the gods". There is no suggestion of different sides to his character; but the Avestan Vayu has two aspects. In one he is "harmful" (*sinaka); and in his hymn, *Yast 15, worship is offered only to "that Vayu which belongs to the Bounteous Spirit". In the later Zoroastrian tradition a clear distinction is made between the "good Vay" and the "evil Vay", the latter being little more than a demon of death. Much

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375 Yt. 8.9. In Sassanian times Satavāsa's name, as Sadvēs, was given to a rain-making divinity in the Manichean version of the rain-myth, see Boyce, "Sadwēs and Pēsha".
378 See Darmesteter, ZA II, 418 n. 38.
379 See ibid., p. 644, and further in Vol. III of the present work.
380 Ibid., p. 418 n. 37.
381 Śirā, I. 13.
382 See in more detail in Chapter 5.
384 This provides a good parallel to the development postulated by Lommel, whereby *Harahvat aradvī sūrā came to be invoked simply as Aradvī Sūrā.
385 Despite the caution shown by some scholars it seems reasonable to suppose, in the light of the parallel Vedic and Iranian evidence, that Vāta is an ancient god. According to Herodotus, I. 131, the "winds" were among the six natural objects worshipped, under "Zeus", by the ancient Persians. In VII.191 he records an especial ceremony in their honour.
386 See Yt. 8.33, and for further references Gray, loc. cit.
387 Stein, Zer. dersteins on Indo-Sythian coins, 4 with fig. v.
389 E.g. Yt. 10.9.
390 In Avestan ā has become ā. This change is particular to Avestan. The Pahlavi form of the god's name is Vāy.
391 Rā. 10.168.4; see A. Hillebrandt, Vedicische Mythologie II, 296.
392 See Keith, Rel. and phil. I, 139; Oldenberg, Rel., 227.
393 Yt. 15.3, 37.
study has been devoted to the concept of the two Vayus:393 but it seems probable that Barr came closest to the heart of the matter in the following observations:394 "The Aryans saw in Vāyu both the real wind that blows, hurries forth in the storm with violence and swiftness and is not to be resisted, and the first cosmic life-principle. In all living beings Vāyu is the life-breath, in the Cosmos he is the breath of Life. But Vāyu is also the wind that all the living breathe out at death. So he is both the god of life and death . . . It could not be ignored [by the Zoroastrians] that he hunts, attains and vanquishes both creations, that of the good spirit and that of the evil. All life is in his power". As the lord of life and death Vāyu is both kindly and cruel; and he is conceived as a warrior-god, with golden armour and a golden chariot395 the most swift, strong and mighty, who conquers at a blow.396 In one verse in his yašt he declares that he carries off the man who has been bound;397 and later tradition suggests that this means the man already fettered by death. As all men come to this, Vāyu has the exclusive epithet of "all-conqueror" (vanānīṣṭha).398 Another Avestan text, the Aogmādaša, celebrates his ruthlessness;399 all else may be overcome by the man of strength and courage, "only the path of the pitiless Vāyu can never be avoided". This in itself appears sufficient to account for the awe which Vāyu inspired, and the dread in which one aspect he aroused.

In his own hymn Vāyu appears in unusual isolation; but in the later tradition he is associated or even identified with Rāman Khvāstra, and his hymn is called the Rām Yāšt. As we have seen, Rāman is probably a

concept of Zoroastrian times, who was linked also with Mithra,400 but the reason for the close association between him and Vāyu remains uncertain. Darmesteter suggested401 that, as with Mithra, the link was through Rāman’s epithet, since as god of the air Vāyu also possessed "good pastures", the great spaces of sky in which the clouds live, the celestial "cows" whose milk is the rain. Another explanation, offered in a Pahlavi text, is that the "good Vāy" is called Rām (a word which can mean joy as well as peace) because he guides the souls of the righteous on their way to Paradise, and so gives joy to them.402 Whatever the true explanation, it is presumably Vāyu’s abode in the empty air which brought him also into association with Zurvān “Time” and Thwāsā “Firmament”, in the speculations of later Zoroastrianism. There is nothing, however, in Vāyu’s yašt to suggest that such speculations had any place in Iranian paganism. Zurvān himself has a minor role only in the Zoroastrian liturgy,403 and as a divinity is not mentioned in any of the yašt. His place in later theology and belief will accordingly be discussed hereafter.404 As well as the “abstract” gods, and these gods of natural phenomena, the pagan Iranians evidently worshipped cult gods, namely Haoma and Gōus Urvan, divine beings who appear to have been created by the recurrent acts of worship. They will accordingly be considered in connection with the ritual.405 Linked with one of this pair of deities are two other divine beings. One is Gōus Tašan, whose name means “Creator of the Cow” (or “Bull”—the one word is used for both in Avestan). This divinity is spoken of by Zoroaster himself, and in Yasna 110.57 he is invoked together with Gōus Urvan (as he still is in Zoroastrian ritual). In the yasna he is called upon in association with the Gāthic Amāla Sāntas.406 Nothing is related of him, his character or functions; but it is generally agreed that he is to be identified with Vedic Tvastr, the “Fashiner”.407 The prophet apparently also refers to him as Thwās̄tār, a name etymologically identical with Tvastr.408 In the Vedas the “Fashiner” is the smith of the gods, and maker also of living creatures.409 It is probable that

393 Ideas first advanced by Nyberg, Rel., 300-1, were developed by Wikander in his Vāyu (Uppsala 1941). (Wikander’s subsequent attempt to associate Vāyu with the hero Rustam, La nouvelle Clio II, 1950, 310-29, may hardly be taken seriously, see Vol. IV, appendix.) See also Widengren in his various books on Old Iranian religion; Zaedner, Zurvan, 89-91; Duchesne-Guillemin, La Religion, 182-4. Recently Burrow, JRAI 1973, 131, has suggested that the “good Vāyu” was the divinity venerated by the Iranians, the “bad Vāyu” the one worshipped by their enemies, the Indian settlers in Iran, who (he thought) provided the “Saevic” element in Avestan vocabulary. A number of penetrating observations about Vāyu were made by Lemmel, Die Yāst’s, 144-50, who was critical of those who failed to distinguish sufficiently between Vāyu and Vāta. Rather surprisingly, Nyberg, although he elevated Vāyu into one of his “supreme gods”, nevertheless identified him with Vāta (see his Rel., 73), in which he was followed by his pupils. Cf. also Barr, Avesta, 437-4.

394 Barr, Avesta, 42-3; English translation by Duchesne-Guillemin, Western Response, 59. The order of the sentences has been rearranged a little here to suit the present context. Golden armour, apparel and ornaments are not unconsciously ascribed to the gods; and it seems forced to lay weight on this (see Wikander, Vāyu 30-3).

395 For a detailed analysis of Vāyu’s epithets (contained in Yāst 15.42-7) see Wikander, op. cit.

396 Yāst 15.57.

397 See Yāst 15.44.

in pagan Iran, as in Vedic India, there were a number of creator gods; but it seems remarkable that Zoroaster should himself have acknowledged Thwérštar, and by use of the name Gōuš Tašan have assigned to him, apparently, a particular creative function (or a simple one to a possession of it). One can but suppose that the prophet saw this ancient divinity as a servant of Ahura Mazdā, who had delegated to him one specialised creativity. Outside the Gāthās the word thwérštar occurs only twice, and each time it appears to be used of Ahura Mazdā himself—perhaps in emphasis upon the Zoroastrian doctrine of the one supreme Creator.

The other divinity who, like Gōuš Tašan, is regularly associated with Gōuš Urvan is Druvāspā. The name of this goddess appears in origin to be simply an epithet, meaning "possessing sound horses"; and she seems a secondary creation, evolved presumably after the Iranian warriors had learnt to harness the horse. Yašt 9, called in Pahlavi Gōš Yašt (for Gōuš Urvan) is in honour of Druvāspā; but only the first two verses show originality, the larger part of the hymn being made up of invocations very close to those found in the hymns to Arādvī and Aši. In the opening verse Druvāspā is said to care for cattle, large and small; and she has been identified on one of the Kušān coins as represented by a male figure with a trotting horse, under which is written ΔPOOAÇO." The fact that Druvāspā is a goddess makes it possible that she evolved originally from an epithet of the chariot-driving Aši, who in pagan times appears to have been a powerful divinity, probably much worshipped by fighting men.

Both Gōuš Tašan and Druvāspā appear as deities defined by special functions. Another such being is the modest Hadiš, who is known only from a fairly "recent" part of the Avesta, and in the Pahlavi books. It is possible, nevertheless, that he was a minor pagan divinity. His name means "Abode, Home", and the Sasanian glossators called him simply the "Spirit of the House" (mēneg i khānag). According to his epithets Hadiš possessed pastures, bestowed grain and well-being, and was compassionate. The only legend recorded of him tells how he was sent as divine messenger to the first man and woman, to teach them how to bless their bread. As Darmesteter pointed out, the Vedic parallel to Hadiš is Vastospati, "Lord of the Homestead", a beneficent minor divinity who presided over the foundation of a house.

These then appear to have been the divinities of pagan Iran who were accepted by Zoroaster as beneficent. Of those whom he rejected as false gods, the daēvas, only the names of Indra, Nāghaithya and Saurva are known. In Vedic India these gods were honoured in the same pantheon as the Asuras, by the same priests, and with in general the same rites; and this was presumably the case also in pagan Iran. The Vedic Indra and Nāsatyā have benevolent traits, but "beside the Ađityas, the wrathful and compassionate guardians of rta, there stands ever Indra in another role, as the lavish friend of his worshippers, caring little about sin and righteousness, one who belongs to a divine world which, ordained originally to serve the human desire for power and wealth, was indifferent to the world of moral ideals, and only slowly and superficially entered into contact with it." As for Šarva, it is possible that already in Indo-Iranian times he was a menacing being, like the Vedic Rudra with whom he is connected, who has been characterised as "terrible as a wild beast", a divinity through whom evil reached up into the world of the gods.

It is not difficult to see why Zoroaster, with his passionate pursuit of righteousness, should have rejected such gods, together with all amoral divine beings who were associated with them.

In general, however, the Indo-Iranians seem to have regarded their divinities hopefully, as being by nature kindly disposed towards men; and evil they appear to have attributed in the main to lesser, spiteful beings, the demons and witches and fearsome monsters who inhabited this world rather than the heavenly one beyond it. The pagan Iranians also conceived, however, of a subterranean kingdom ruled over by "the god who is said to dwell beneath the earth", who claimed as his subjects those spirits

410 See Leumann, loc. cit. It has often been noted that Zoroaster uses the word dādi also of the divinity Ārmattā (Y. 34.10; cf. Vr. 19.2); but Gershevitch, AHM, 169 suggests that this should be an adjective, meaning "of the Creator", rather than the noun "creator".

411 Y. 42.2; 57.2. On these passages see Gershevitch, AHM, 54. In his further discussion, in which he seeks to identify Gōuš Tašan with Sponta Mainyu (as Darmesteter and others had done earlier) Gershevitch appears to force the evidence a little in the interests of the theory of Zoroaster's strict monothéism.

412 See Lommel, Die Yašt's, 57-8.

413 See Stein, Zoro. deities on Indo-Scythian coins, 3-4 with Fig. III; Darmesteter, ZA II, 432.

414 Vr. 1.9; 2.11; 9.5; Dk. VII.1.12-3 (ed. Madan, 593-11 ff.). On Hadiš see Darmesteter, Ét. ir. II, 201-3; Henning, BSOAS XII, 1947, 59-62.


416 For Thrita/Thraetaona see the following chapter. For such divinized concepts as the seasons and times of day etc., see Gray, Foundations under their various names. There is also the baffling figure of Dāmošt Upamazā, who accompanies Mithra in the form of a wild boar (Yt. 10.127). The meaning of his name is obscure, and he is little known outside the yašt's. He is almost certainly therefore a pagan deity, whom Gershevitch (AHM, 136-9) has interpreted as the ailer ego of Varathraghna; but it cannot be said that his arguments appear wholly conclusive. For other interpretations (none of them generally accepted) see Gershevitch, ibid.

417 On them see above, pp. 53-5.

418 Oldenberg, Ét., 303-6.

419 Ibid., 291.

420 Herodotus, VII.114.
who at death failed to make their way up to the sunny abode of the Ahuras. This dread lord was perhaps the pagan Yima, for his Indian counterpart, Yama, is a lord of death, who seeks out those whose time has come and takes them to his dark realm. Yama is popularly regarded with awe and dread; and probably in Iran also the ruler of the kingdom of the dead was feared and his messengers thought of with distress. There may be said, therefore, to have been a dualism with regard to the divine already in the pagan period: a theistic as distinct from an ethical dualism, with opposition between the gods of the sky, dispensing prosperity and happiness here and hereafter, and those of the underworld, to whom men sacrificed in order to avoid their dark and joyless abode. Through Zoroaster’s teaching this underworld came to be regarded as a place not merely of negations, but of punishment, in fact as hell; and the daēvas became, in their debasement, its inhabitants, to be executed by all true followers of the prophet.

421 On Yima/Yama see more fully in the following chapter.
422 The theistic dualism latent in Rigvedic thought was stressed by W. Kiefer, Die Kosmogaphie der Inden, 13*-14*.

CHAPTER THREE

DEMONS AND EVIL-DOING, FABULOUS CREATURES, FIRST MEN AND HEROES

The Avesta shows that the pagan Iranians, like the Indians of old, felt their world to be inhabited by innumerable lesser spirits, some kindly but many malignant. Some of these evil powers sought to enter a man’s body and harm him directly. Others lurked about his homestead and fields, ready to make him stumble and fall, or to harm his cattle or blight his crops; and beyond, the untamed forest and plain were full of menace. Evil threatened everywhere, but could be warded off by proper precautions, such as banning formulas or propitiatory gifts; and some men were held to have acquired power over these dark forces, to compel them to serve their own ends. Hence the only word common to the Indo-Iranian tradition for such evil beings, namely yâtu, appears to denote primarily a class of demons, but came gradually in Iran to be used for the men who were able to control them, the sorcerers or magicians. Younger Avestan yâtu (Persian jâdû) already has sometimes this latter meaning, for the gradual debasing in Zoroastrian usage of the word daēva from “god” to “false god” and thence to “demon” led to this becoming the term in Zoroastrianism for the powers of darkness. Nevertheless the original sense of yâtu as an evil spirit always inheres in the word as it is used in the old Zoroastrian confession of faith, the Fravârânê, and also when it is linked in denunciatory formulas with pairâhâ. This latter term denotes a class of female supernatural beings of malicious character, who seek to beguile and harm mankind—some of them witch-like in character, but in general more powerful than witches, as the yâtus of old were more powerful than wizards.  

2 On the Indian yâtu see, e.g., Oldenberg, Rel., 265 ff. The Rigvedic and Avestan passages for yâtu were brought together and discussed by Spiegel, Die arische Periode, 215-23. A similar semantic development (from evil being to the man having dealings with him) is widely found in other languages, e.g., English “warlock”.
3 E.g. Y.4.8.44: nôst yâtanâ pairâhâsâ; nôst yâtanâ malyânum “not devils and she-devils, not wizards among men.”
4 E.g. Y.12.4: vi daēvâsâ vi datuvaŋghis vi yâtuvi vi yâtumângih “[I forswear association with] false gods and the followers of false gods, devils and the followers of devils.”
5 In the Pahlavi Sanskrit translation of the Avesta pairâhâ is regularly rendered by mahârâhâ “great she-devil”, see Gray, Foundations, 195. In the Middle Iranian Manichaean
These wicked beings could work evil at any time of day or night; but their powers were naturally thought to be greatest during the hours of darkness, and it was then that they did most harm, either through their own proper activity or in the service of wicked masters. One of the tasks of the god Tīstya was to combat in the night the malevolent pairikās of the sky. He "overcomes the pairikās, he conquers the pairikās who fall as shooting stars between earth and heaven" (Yt.8.8). Mithra too, who with the sun puts darkness to flight, is a "smiter down of pairikās" (Yt.10.26). The Vendidad contains a banning formula against the pairi khā "who approaches fire, water, earth, cattle and plants" (Vd.11.9). There is a pairi kā, Dužyāryā, who withers the crops and brings bad harvests (Yt.8.51,54); and another called Mūs, the "Rat", who appears to be the demon-personification of rats and mice, and was probably conceived herself in rodent form. That pairi kās do sometimes appear as animals is further attested by the tale of the Kayanian hero Srit (Av. Thrita) who, wishing for death, sought out a pairi kā living in a forest in the shape of a dog. He slashed at her with his sword, cutting her in two. Two dogs then leapt at him, and he went on striking and cleaving until there were a thousand dogs, which tore him to pieces. Other pairi kās, it seems, took on human form, and some made themselves enchantingly beautiful and so beguiled men to their harm (hence the peri s of later Persian folklore). In the Pahlavi translation of Yt.1.10 the word pairi kā is glossed as meaning one who lures a man through enchantment to grievous sin; and the hero Karasāspa is said to have been accompanied by the pairi kā Khnathaiti, evidently to his undoing (Vd.1.10). That wicked men could sometimes learn to control pairi kās for their own ends, as others mastered yātus, is suggested by the fact that Pitaona, whom Karasāspa slew, has the epithet of "many pairi kās" (As-parika, Yt.19.41).

In Zoroastrian tradition there is a female spirit of evil, Nasūš, who is said to be "of all dēs ... the most bold, continuously polluting and fraudulent". She is the demon of the Corpse, or Decay; and in the Vendidad she is described as a hideous motteled fly which comes from the north (the region of evil) and settles on the body, flitting from part to part. She is never called by the term pairi kā, but is a drug, a feminine noun also used in the Avesta of the male demon Būti, and for a few other nameless fiends. In the Rigveda, the cognate druh is also used of individual demons, male and female, as well as in the more general sense of "wrong, harm", so this usage can safely be attributed to the pagan period in Iran, with the yātu, like the pairi kā, being an evil being of lesser powers.

Although the drug Nasūš is conceived in insect form, and Tīstya's opponent Apaos̱a, "Death", appears, as we have seen, as a hairless, ugly horse, other arch-fiends seem to have human shape, although probably all in some way hideous or deformed. The only demon who is named in the Gaethā (but without a generic term to describe him) is Aesōma, "Wrath"; and he has the standing epithet of khrvidrū "of bloody club" which suggests that he was pictured as a savage ruffian. Astōvidhātu, "Dissolution" or "Death", was imagined as having a noose in his hand with which to encircle his victim's throat; and Būṣyāstā, "Sloth", is called "long-handed", for she can stretch out to reach any man who has not the moral strength to resist her.

However these demons were grouped or classified in pagan Iran, one distinction among them which strikes the modern student is that whereas some were held to assault man's physical being or damage the material world around him, others laid siege to his moral nature. It seems unlikely, however, that this particular difference was clearly apprehended in pagan times. Hunger and Thirst, Sickness, Old Age and Decay were personified in the same way as Wrath or Envy or Sloth; and these personifications, like those of the "abstract" gods, were evidently conceived as distinct powers, with an existence and volition of their own. Thus a person in the grip of rage or hatred was regarded as the victim of an external force, no less than one who shook with fever or was palsied with age; and if his consequent actions were harmful and transgressed the right (asa), this "sin" (aenah, agah) was regarded as an evil into which the particular

14 See Bartholomae, Ais. Wb. 780 s.v. drug. In later times the word dāha was regularly used for male demons, drug (especially the inflected nom. sg. durukh) for female ones.
16 See above, p. 74.
18 See Gray, Foundations, 201-2. On the noose in connection with Indian Yama see Ch. 4, below.
19 On Būṣyāstā see Benveniste, RHR CXXX, 1945, 14-16.
20 None of the names of individual demons of sickness occurs in the surviving Zoroastrian literature, but Benveniste has traced a probably ancient Iranian *Ala, demon of purpureal fever, who attacks the newly-delivered mother and seeks also to devour her child, See his article "Le dieu Ohrmazd et le démon Albasti", J JA 1960, 65-74.
demon had trapped him, and from which he in his turn would suffer through the intervention of the gods. As in Vedic India "it is the objective fact of the sinful act which is apprehended" rather than that of the consenting will,21 sin being more a religious than an ethical concept. A man could therefore hope to protect himself against sin (or free himself from it) by sacrifice and propitiation prayers, in the same way that, if the gods were favourable, he could hope to banish illness or ill-luck by amulets, offerings and religious formulas. It was a matter of involving the greater, beneficent powers against the lesser, evil ones, and also of seeking to appease the latter so as to abate their malignancy. The help of the gods was in part to be sought by acting according to their will; but even if a man tried to walk carefully in the ways of *asa*, he might sin involuntarily through some unconscious trespass, or even through the acts of others. Thus if at the sacrifice the victim uttered a sound before it was slain, this for the Vedic Indian was a sin upon the man offering the sacrifice, for which atonement must be made through additional rites. Such concepts must in general have prevented a deepening of moral awareness, since the causes of wrong-doing were thus set on a plane with those of physical suffering and simple mischance, and much the same remedies were prescribed indiscriminately for all of them.22

As well as demons and other malicious spirits, the Indo-Iranians imagined the world as peopled with fabulous creatures, some beneficent, others ravaging and destructive. There is no identity between the marvellous beasts of the two traditions, so imagination presumably went on working in this field after the two peoples had separated—as indeed it demonstrably did in Iran even after the time of the prophet.23 Most of these strange creatures are mentioned in what seem to be old parts of the *yātis*, or in the supplementary texts to *Yasna Haftanghāz* (*Y*.42), and belong evidently to the pre-Zoroastrian world. One among them which is still celebrated in Persian epic and folklore is "the great Saena bird" (*Y*.14.41), the *Saena maroqha* (Pahlavi Sēn muro, Persian Simurg), conceived, it seems, as a huge falcon, which has its perch on the Tree of All Seeds or of All

Healing (*Y*.12.17), and which (the Pahlavi texts relate) by its great weight and the beating of its wings breaks the twigs of this tree and scatters its seeds, which wind and rain then carry over the earth.24 It is also said to suckle its young25, and in the Persian epic the tale is told of how it reared the hero Zāl, abandoned in infancy, in its own nest.26

The Tree of All Seeds on which the Saena nests grows in the middle of the sea Vourukaša (*Y*.12.17); and round it, the Pahlavi books relate, there swims perpetually the Kara fish, of which the Avesta records that it has the sharpest perceptions, and even in the depths of the waters can perceive a ripple as fine as a hair (*Y*.14.29).27 Its task is to ward off all harmful creatures, and especially frogs, which seek to gnaw at the roots of the life-giving tree.28

There is also "the ass which is righteous (astavan) and stands in the middle of the sea Vourukaša" (*Y*.41.28), or at times strides purposefully around it.29 According to the Pahlavi books, this creature has three legs, six eyes and nine mouths, and is white of body, with a golden horn upon its head. When it stales, it destroys all harmful creatures within the waters, for it feeds on spiritual (mēnōg) food only, and all things about it are pure. Ambergris is its dung. With it in *Y*.42 is reverenced the Vasi Panča.sadvarā (*Y*.42.4), which according to the Bundahīsīn lives likewise in the sea Vourukaša. This appears to be a kind of Leviathan, and is so huge that if it were to rush swiftly along from sunrise to sunset it still would not have covered as much ground as the length of its own body; and it rules over all denizens of the waters.30

Another vast creature, known only from the Pahlavi books, is the bull Hadhayans, also called Srisōk, which is so large that it alone in ancient days could pass over the barriers of water and mountain and forest that separate the seven regions of the earth, and it carried men on its back from one to another.31 Hadhayans appears to be originally quite distinct from

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23 Cf. the curious, apparently late, legend of Gōpātšāli, "who from foot to middle of the body is an ox, and from the middle of the body above is a man", on which see Bailey, *ZDS* VI, 1932, 950-3. On Gōpātšāli's ritual activity at the sea shore see Boyce, *JRAI* 1966, 117.
24 See Zādspram III, 39 (ed. BTA, 30, lxxvii); Mundo i Khrod LXII, 37-9 (ed. West, text 57, transl. 186), and further in Ch. 5, below.
25 Great Bundahīsīn XIII, 23 (BTA, 123).
26 Shōhdānē, Tehran ed. (pub. 1935-1936), I 133-4; transl. Warner, I 241-2. Here the Simurg is represented as a bird of prey, which rears the baby on blood instead of milk.
27 The Kara fish is mentioned also in *Vd*. 19.42.
28 See GBd. XXIVa (BTA, 193).
29 See GBd. XXIVb (BTA, 219-?). Nyberg, *Rel*, 285, argued, against the tradition, that Khara ("cast") here was originally a "Turanian divinity" rather than a fabulous creature.
30 See GBd. XXIVa (BTA, 193). Nyberg, ibid., again took the Vasi for a divinity; and W. Wust, *ARW* XXXVI, 1940, 250 ff. understood it to be a "pointed blade" or "dagger", worshipped as a symbol of forkship.
31 See GBd. XIII, 36 (BTA, 127); XVIII, 9 (BTA, 159), XXIV, 22 (BTA, 197). On the name Hadhayans see West, *SBE* V, 69 n. 3; Christensen, *Les types du premier homme... dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, Stockholm 1927, I 147.
the Uniquely-created Bull (Gav aēvā.dāta), which was the product, it seems, of learned cosmogonic speculation.

There were other fabulous birds as well as the Saēna, two of which are regarded as particularly holy in Zoroastrian tradition. One, Kāršīptar, the "swiftly flying", 32 is said to have spread the prophet's teachings in Yamna's underground kingdom (Vd.2.42). 33 Another, Ašū.zuštā, "Being loved of aṣa", according to the Pahlavi books utters holy words (Avesta) in its own tongue, thus causing devils to flee away even from barren places. 34 The parings of human nails should be dedicated to this bird, so that it can guard them and prevent them being turned into hostile weapons by demons (Vd.17.9). Tradition identifies Ašū.zuštā as the owl, vigilant against dēw at the time of their greatest activity, night, 35 and the practice of dedicating nail-parings to it by uttering the appropriate words from the Vendidad is still observed by strictly orthodox Zoroastrians. Yet another legendary bird, patriotic rather than holy, is the Cambūs, whom we have already met in the myth of Aṣām Nāpāšt, pecking up non-Iranians as if they were grain. It is said to be the worthiest of birds after the Saēna, 36 which it helps in the yearly task of distributing seeds from the Tree of All Healing. 37

These and other beneficient birds and beasts of fable oppose the demons and goblins which vex man in malice, and also the noxious creatures that inhabit the world, for which the generic Avestan term is khrāfstra. 38 For the Iranians of old, who had naturally an anthropocentric view of life, khrāfstra included all creatures that were harmful to man, and to his domestic animals and crops. The term thus covered all beasts of prey and hungry rodents, as well as insects such as locust and wasp and thieving ant. It also included those creatures which, though not harmful, were repulsive to man, such as beetles and spiders, lizards and tortoises. Among

32 See Bartholomae, Air. Wb. 458.
33 Cf. GB. XXIVg (BTA. 190).
34 GB. XXIv (BTA. 199). The name Irdansā, which occurs among the Elamite tablets at Persepolis, is the equivalent of Av. ašū.zuštā, see Benveniste, Titres et noms propres, 84.
35 For references see Bartholomae, Air. Wb. 259.
36 GB. XVIIa (BTA. 157). Otherwise GB. XVII.11 (BTA. 155), where the Karšīptar is said to be the chief of birds.
37 Mēwēg i Khrad LXII.40-2 (West, text 57, transl. 186).
38 The word occurs once in the Gāthās, Y.28.5, where it has been variously interpreted. According to some, the prophet used it there pejoratively for "roving enemies of the faith... robber bands" (see Bartholomae, Air. Wb. 518). Others see in it a reference to Ahuramic creatures whom he was bannning by his mēthras from the sanctified place of worship, the ābāt, and hence symbolically from the whole good creation (see Humbach, Die Gathas II, 9-10). Bailey (Hespung Mem. Vol., 25-8) brought together a number of Pahlavi passages concerning khrāfstra, and suggested a derivation of the word from an IE verbal base *skrēp-, meaning "bite, sting, pierce".

39 See Vd. 5.36; Darmesteter, ZA II, 213 n. 15.
40 See Darmesteter, ibid., 212 n. 13; Rūṣyāts, ed. Unvala, I 276-17-75, transl. Dhabhar, 270. The cherished "Persian" cat belongs to Muslim Iran, see further in Vol. III.
41 On Ažī Dāhāk in the Avesta and in later literature see Christensen, Dēnomologis, 204.
42 Yt. 19.40, see Christensen, ibid., 17-18 and cf. Dādēštān i dāmīq, Pars. 71-4 (transl. West, SBE XVIII, 217). It is suggested that as Ažī Vīšāpa, the "dragon with poisonous slaver", this monster left its trace in the višaps of Armenian legend, see Benveniste, "L'origine du višap arménien", Rev. Ét. Arménienes VII, 1927, 7-91.
43 Yt. 5.38, 19.41, see Christensen, op. cit., 18-20. The Iranian Gandharva has, it seems, a counterpart in the Vedic Gandharva, a beneficent creature who inhabits the region of air and guards the heavenly soma, and who in later Indian mythology developed into a whole class of heavenly beings, who (pace Damėzil and his followers) have nothing but the name in common with the Iranian monster, see Geiger, Die Amša Sپna, 46.
44 Yt. 19.43-44. See Christensen, op. cit., 20.
45 See Darmesteter, ZA II, 626 n. 38.
46 On another group of terrestrial dragons, namely the višaps, see above, n. 47; and on the survival in Shaggni of a word apparently connected with Vedic Śūnā, the "Hisser", see Morgenstierne, "An ancient Indo-Iranian word for dragon", J. M. Únvala Mem. Vol., Bombay 1964, 95-8.
Iranian tradition of a dragon such as the Indian Vṛtra (a late concept, it seems\textsuperscript{47}), who guards the cosmic waters and is defeated by the gods themselves.

A number of great heroes are celebrated in the Avesta, and it appears that tales preserved by various individual families and tribes concerning their own ancestral figures were blended there with common traditions about “culture heroes” and “first men”. A few such tales and traditions evidently go back to the Indo-Iranian period, being known from the Vedas as well as the Avesta; but in each of these cases there are striking differences between the Indian and Iranian traditions. The most prominent and detailed of these ancient legends is that concerning Yima Kīṣāēta, “king Yima”,\textsuperscript{48} who as Jamšēd still dominates Persian story-telling. The Avestan Yima, son of Vivāŋhvant, appears in the Vedas as Yama, son of Vivavant. The Vedic Yama is the first man to have lived on earth and to have died. He therefore found for others the path to the subterranean kingdom of the dead, where in popular belief he reigns as a dread figure who in a large measure has been assimilated to Death himself, all-powerful and pitiless.\textsuperscript{49} As such he has traits in Iran that in Iran belong to Vayu as god of death, or to Astō vidhāhū, demon of dissolution. His is a call that all must heed when their time comes; and he sends his servants to carry off the doomed man “haltered by the neck” (grīvabaddham)\textsuperscript{50}, as Astō.vidhāhū snares his victims with a noose. His power extends over all the dead except those who succeed in attaining Paradise on high, for “in heaven Yama is not”.\textsuperscript{51} The spirits of the dead travel to his realm by a downward path; but in RV.10.14.2 this gloomy region is called gavuṣyā “cattle-pasture”, an expression which has been connected with Yima’s constant epithet of hūṣṭhū “having good herds”.\textsuperscript{52} However, in the aristocratic tradition of the Rigveda Yama’s place is also set in Paradise above (e.g. RV.10.14.8), where he rules in happiness over the blessed dead.\textsuperscript{53}

In the Avesta the legends concerning Yima are more complex, and need considerable unravelling\textsuperscript{54}. If this is done, however, the same basic components are found as in the Indian version. According to the second chapter of the Vendīdād, Yima “of the good herds” ruled over all the world in the beginning, and in his kingdom there was no cold wind or hot, no sickness or death. After 300 years earth became too full of cattle and men, dogs, birds and red glowing fires; and he smote it with golden goad and whip, and it became broader by one third. After the 600th year of his rule he enlarged it again, and once more after the 900th. Thereafter (if one combines this Vendīdād account with references in the Gāthās and the ancient Zām Yāñī) it seems that Yima sinned. Zoroaster himself alludes, though obscurely, to Yima deceiving the people, apparently in some way connected with the bull-sacrifice.\textsuperscript{55} In Yt.19.33 it is said that Yima allowed himself to entertain a lie in his mind, so that Khvarohnah, the divine Fortune, left him and the days of his glory were ended. In the Pahlavi texts and Persian epic it is said that “Jam” sinned through arrogance, claiming that he himself was God.\textsuperscript{56} Presumably this is the legend alluded to in both Yt.19 (his claim being the “lie” spoken of there) and the Gāthās\textsuperscript{57} —Yima having perhaps instituted a sacrifice to himself, as if he were indeed divine. This story of his fall from grace (for which there is no Indian parallel) was presumably evolved by priests of the ethical Ahuric cult to account in moral terms for death coming to Yima; for according to the version of the legend in the Shāhānūma Jamšēd died because he thus erred. Despite this development of his story Yima, Khīṣāēta, as Jamšēd, remains the greatest hero of Iranian tradition, the ideal of kingly power.

\textsuperscript{47} See above, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{48} On the title kīṣāēta see above, p. 60 n. 311.

\textsuperscript{49} On this aspect of Yima see in detail E. Arbman, ARW XXV, 1927, 380-4. It emerges from the later Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas rather than the Rigveda (on whose concept of Yama as mild king of the blessed in Paradise see further below). Arbman appears right when he argues (ARW XXVI, 1928, 210, 212-4) that it is the later texts which in fact preserve the older concept of Yama, which persisted (and persists) despite the more hopeful myth of the Rigveda.

\textsuperscript{50} See Arbman, ARW XXV, 382.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 383 (citing the Kūthaka Upaniṣad).

\textsuperscript{52} See P. Thieme, Studien zur ind. Wortwende u. Religionsgeschichte, 47-8, 50. This region receives not only human souls but also those of duly sacrificed animals, see further in Ch. 4.

\textsuperscript{53} See further below.

\textsuperscript{54} The chief Avestan passages concerning Yima are Vd. 2; Y. 4.4-5; Yt. 5.26-6; 15.15-6; 17.28-31; 19.18-28. The Yima legend has been illuminatingly discussed by Lommel in the appendix to his Yāst’s, 190-207, where he refers to interesting comparisons with Vedic material made by J. Hertel, Himnemilder im Veda und Avesta, 1924, 25 ff. For references to earlier discussions see Gray, Foundations, 14 n. 1; Geiger, Amata Sponsas, 44-56; Christensen, Le premier homme, II, passim. In recent years a good deal has been written (by S. Hartman, G. Widengren, R. C. Zahnner and others) on a supposed connection between, or even identification of, Yima and Mithra. This appears a wholly baseless hypothesis, originating largely in misunderstandings of Pahlavi and Persian texts. Against Zahnner’s arguments see in detail Duchesne-Guillemin, HJ VII, 1964, 400-2; against those of Hartman, Boyce, BSOAS XVII, 1955, 174-6, and see further below, p. 98 n. 72.

\textsuperscript{55} Y. 32.8. On this verse see Bartholomae, Air. Wb. 1866-7; Mold, Céle, 221 ff. It is, however, extremely obscure, and Humebach, Die Gathas I, 97, Lente, A Loust’s Leg, Studies in honour of S H. Taftiz, 1937, 31, translates it in a way which contains no reference at all to either bull or sacrifice. Formerly, when it was generally thought that the blood sacrifice was abhorred by Zoroastrians, it was supposed that Yima’s sin lay in instituting or practising this rite; but this interpretation is no longer tenable. (On the Zoroastrian doctrine concerning animal sacrifice see below, Ch. 8.)

\textsuperscript{56} See notably Pahl. Rit. Dd. XXII a.10 (ed. Dhabhar, 101-2), where Jam is represented as having claimed that he had created all the seven creations, sky, water, earth, plants, animals and man, thereby speaking a lie. See also the Shāhānūma, Tahir ed., I, 26-7. transl. Warner, I 134.

\textsuperscript{57} On this see Lente, art. cit.
and splendour, the "most glorious of mortals". There are, moreover, traces in the Iranian tradition, as in the Indian one, of the dead king being regarded as lord of the departed in Paradise on high. Thus in the legend of the birth of Zoroaster it is said that the prophet's spirit or fravashi, which had been dwelling with the Immortals, was led to the boundary of Paradise by Nairy6.sahha, the divine messenger, and by Yima, from which it would appear that Yima was regarded as having his abode in Heaven, with authority there over souls. As for the evidently older belief that he ruled an underworld kingdom of the dead, it is possible, as we have seen, that the pagan Yima is to be identified with "the god who is supposed to dwell beneath the earth", who was propitiated by the ancient Persians. (That the hero-king was known to them as well as to the Avestan people is proved by the occurrence of the proper names Yamakka, Yamaksedda at Persepolis.) This part of the ancient legend must have been impossible to reconcile with Zoroastrian doctrines, however, since in Zoroaster's teachings this subterranean place had become identified with Hell, and its ruler was the malignant being who was hostile to Ahura Mazda. As such it could no longer be the abode of king Yima; and possibly for this reason a particular development of his legend took place in Iran, recorded only in the Vendidad. Here there is no reference to Yima's sin and consequent death. Instead it is said that when he had reigned for 1,000 years the gods came to an assembly with him and the best of the men whom he ruled; and they told him that winters were about to come upon the "bad corporeal world", bringing cruel frosts and snow on mountain and plain. When the snow melted it would carry away stores of fodder, so that cattle would starve and it would be a wonder thereafter to see the footprint of a sheep. Yima was accordingly to build a var beneath the earth, and to bring into it pairs of the best and finest men and women, and the best and finest animals, and the seeds of all the biggest and most fragrant plants, and also of the most edible and delicious ones. No people might enter there who had either physical or mental defects. The var was to be divided into three parts (which have been taken to represent the three divisions of Iranian society). Water flows there, and there is always pasture, green and never exhausted. This underground place has its own lights, which resemble the sun and moon and stars, and there a year passes as a day. Each couple a child is born every 40 years, and they live the happiest of lives under Yima's rule.

The redaction in which the Vendidad survives is late (assigned usually to the Parthian period); and it is therefore perfectly possible that, as has been suggested, this part of the legend is also late, and shaped under foreign influence—that it owes its inspiration to Mesopotamian tradition of the great flood which afflicted the "bad corporeal world" (in itself a wholly unZoroastrian conception). The shape and nature of Yima's var have always been a puzzle; but if this structure derives from a floating ark, and has been awkwardly adapted to Iranian legend, much that is perplexing becomes less so. The flood itself appears to have been transformed into the sort of disaster conceivable on the Iranian plateau; and placing the var beneath the ground keeps this new version of Yima's fate in accord with the ancient belief that he was lord of the underworld, where he welcomed the dead to "cattle pastures", the Elysian fields of Iran. According to the Vendidad, however, Yima does not die, but becomes one of those great ones who pass living into the hereafter (the flood story requiring the survival of its hero). Like Arthur in Avalon, or Frederick Barbarossa in his mountain cave, the Iranian king is said to have withdrawn into a hidden place, where he exists tranquilly through the present sorry times. There is no suggestion, moreover, that other men on dying might find their way to Yima's var, to which entry was possible but once, to escape the great disaster. The Vendidad legend appears thus to be an awkward adaptation of an alien tradition, at odds with both the other Iranian sources and the Indian ones. In time it came to be associated with the developed apocalyptic tradition, the opening of Yima's var being one of the glorious events that will take place at the end of the eleventh millennium. The legend appears thus as a part of Zoroastrian scholastic learning, and it never entered, apparently, into popular tradition, for it is the older story of Yima's sin and death which survives in the Book of Kings.

Although in the existing texts Yama/Yima is represented as the ruler,

7th century B.C. excavated in Khwarezmia; but doubt has since been thrown on the nature of these remains, see Frumkin, Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia, 89.

65 Ibd., 2.40.
66 Ibd. 2.41. (The figure 40 is generally used in Iran for a vague large number.)
67 The connection with the story of Gilgamesh and other Mesopotamian legends was made by Herzfeld, Zoroaster I, 331-6, who assumed that this was the result of Influences on the Yima legend as early as the Median period.
68 See further below, Ch. 11.
not progenitor, of the human race, the Vedas know a consort for him, namely his twin sister Yama, by whom he has children. Her existence is not mentioned in the Avesta\(^71\); but there is an Avestan common noun meaning (like Skt. yama) “twin”, and later forms of this word occur in Middle Iranian languages. The Pahlavi tradition records, moreover, a female Yimak, and it seems possible that she belongs to the old Indo-Iranian legend.\(^72\) However this may be, it seems inevitable that with priestly speculation about the origins of mankind Yima, the first ruler, should have been drawn into association with the first man.

In Indian tradition this is Manu, who, like Yama, is described as the son of Vivasvanta, and who in some respects acts as the double of the legendary king.\(^73\) In Iran the name of Manu is preserved only in the compound proper name Manuščithra “Of the race of Manu” (Yt.13.131),\(^74\) and in that of Manušag, who in the Pahlavi books appears as sister of Manuščih. These two are represented there as the descendants of Yima and Yimag, who are themselves made the descendants, at seven removes, of Mašya and Mašyānag, the Iranian first man and his wife,\(^75\) but presumably the originally Iranian Mašya represented the same concept as the Indian Manu (the two words meaning “mortal” and “man” respectively). According to Iranian legend Mašya and his wife came into the world from a plant, a rhubarb stalk that grew and divided and developed into separate human beings.\(^76\) These two, in the Zoroastrian form of the legend, first reverenced Ahura Mazda, but were then seduced by the daēvas and gave them honour instead.\(^77\) Because of this sin it was fifteen years before

\(^71\) It has been suggested that in Y.30.3 the dual yā yima “the twins” should be taken as referring specifically to Yima and his sister, see Lentz, Art. cit., 132-3; but this interpretation appears rather forced. Against it see Gerzhevitch, JNES XXIII, 1964, 32-3.

\(^72\) See Geiger, Amala Spantas, 52. The Pahlavi passages are brought together by Christsen, Le premier homme I, 21 ff.

\(^73\) See, e.g., Bergaigne, La religion védique, I 88; Oldenberg, Rel. 281; Keith, Rel. and Phil. II.3-5, 259.

\(^74\) This sole occurrence of the name Manuščithra in the Avesta is with the adjective Aryan. It was interpreted by Bartholomae, Ahr. Wb. 1135, as that of a Zoroastrian believer, but by Darmesteter (ZA II, 549 n. 279) and others as that of the ancient legendary figure. The phrase of Thraetaona is reverenced in the same verse, with others intervening, and that of Yima in the preceding one—On Aryan see Bartholomae, Ahr. Wb. 299. Nyberg, Rel., 257-5, 293; Christensen, Études sur le zoroastrien de la Perse antique, Copenhagen 1924, 23.

\(^75\) On the variant forms of their names see Christsen, Le premier homme, I, 9-10. It is one of the Pahlavi forms (“mahī”, written as maḥ/mhī) which has been confused by some with “Mīr”, wild deductions being drawn from this (see above, p. 93 n. 54). Virtually all the texts relating to this first human pair have been brought together by Christensen, Le premier homme I, 13 ff.

\(^76\) GBd. XIV, 6-10 (BTA, 127-9).

\(^77\) GBd. XIV, 14-15 (BTA, 129-31).

they had children, twins, whom they devoured.\(^78\) But Ahura Mazda then intervened,\(^79\) and they bore other twin children through whom the world became peopled. The fact that the name Yima seems to have meant “twin” suggests variations here on an ancient legend concerning the origins of man.

Further, the rhubarb plant from which Mašya and Mašyānag grew is said in the Pahlavi books to have sprung from the seed of Gayōmar, Av. Gayō.marstan, “Mortal Life”.\(^80\) He too is a mythical First Man, who is probably to be identified with the Vedic Mārtanīḍa “Mortal Seed”, and therefore must also be regarded as of Indo-Iranian origin. In the Avesta and Pahlavi tradition he is regularly associated with the Uniquely-created Bull, and both appear to belong to the sphere of priestly cosmogonic speculation. They will be considered together therefore in a later chapter.\(^81\)

As we have seen, the Vedas and Avesta agree about the name of Yama/Yima’s father (illogically though it may be for a “first man” to have one). They also concur on his activity, for in Indian tradition Vivasvanta is the first sacrificer. One term for the place of sacrifice is accordingly the “place of Vivasvata”, and the name Vivasvanta can be used honorifically for the priest who officiates there.\(^82\) In Iran Vivāhvīnāt was the first mortal to press the haoma. In reward for this the god Haoma granted him the boon of an illustrious son, Yima.\(^83\) (To this day, Zoroastrian women pray to Hīm if they desire sons who will be famous.)\(^84\) According to Y. 9 the second mortal to press haoma was Atūha, to whom therefore was born the mighty Thraetaona; and the third was Thrita, who begot two sons, Urvākīsaya, a law-giver,\(^85\) and Kārsēspa, one of the greatest of Avestan heroes. With these names it seems that we pass from the world of myth into that of heroic saga; but there are a number of problems involved here also. Thus the name of the third haoma-presser, Thīrta, means with suspicious aptness the “Third One”. Of him, “the most beneficent of the Sāmas” (Y.9.11), we are told that he was the first and greatest of healers.
with "water", the trio were held to have sprung from Agni's spittle. They follow Indra, as Brahmans follow a king, and take upon themselves his sin of killing the dragon, a sin which is washed away from them at each sacrifice with the pouring out of water.\(^8\) They are claimed as divine ancestors by the historical clan of the Āptyas; and opinion among Vedic scholars is divided as to whether the original Tītra Āpta was a god from whom a priestly family chose to claim descent,\(^9\) or a mortal hero, whom reverence by his descendants elevated to the dignity of a divine being.\(^8\)

The Iranian tradition undoubtedly supports the latter interpretation, for there Tītra and Thraētaona are alike regarded as human beings, and it is not a divine Thraētaona who is invoked for help but his soul, his fravashi, regarded as existing after his death here on earth.

In the Vedas there is mention once (RV \textit{1.158.5}) of a Trāitan, who appears obscurely, in a context which does not suggest any connection with the Avestan Thraētaona. On the basis of the existing data one can hardly hope, therefore, to reach certain conclusions; but the following interpretation of the Iranian evidence seems possible, and can be harmonised with the Vedic material on the assumption that there were secondary developments and assimilations in India: in the remote past there existed two great men of the house of *Āptya, one famous as a warrior, the other as a physician. The traditions concerning them became blended and confused, and ultimately in Iran only Thraētaona was widely celebrated, as warrior and physician (a double role already attributed to him in Y.\textit{2.12.131}), whereas in India it was Tītra alone who remained prominent. In Y. 9, in the enumeration of \textit{haoma}-sacriﬁcers, the fact that Thraētaona's name means "third" (or is a homonym of the word for "third") evidently led to his being separated from his kinsman Thraētaona and assigned the place of the third preserver of \textit{haoma}, namely Sāma, progenitor of Karasāspa.\(^8\) The link between Karasāspa and Tītra exists only here. Elsewhere the former is known not as a son of Tītra but as a descendant of Sāma, being famed throughout Iran as Sāma Karasāspa, Sāmān

\(^8\) See Hillebrandt, \textit{Ved. Mythologie II}, 308. On Tītra as the source of sin among men ("the gods remove the sin committed by them on Tītra, who lets it go on to humans") see Rode, \textit{Deliver as from evil}, 149-50.

\(^9\) This appears the commoner view among Vedic scholars. Rönnow regarded Tītra as a divine being connected with water and \textit{soma}; Macdonell saw in him a god of lightning, Bloomfield the scapegoat of the gods, whereas Gonda (\textit{Rel. Indians I}, 58) considers him an ancient divinity of Indra-type, who became largely overshadowed by the greater god. In general, not much attention has been paid to the Iranian evidence in reaching any of these conclusions.


\(^9\) This explanation was first proposed by Geiger, \textit{Amala Sprotas}, 58-9.


\(^{89}\) See Bartholomae, \textit{Ariische Forschungen I}, 8 ff.; IE I, 180; Gershevitch, \textit{Sindia... A. Pagliaro ed. II}, 188-9. The identity of the names was earlier insisted upon by Spiegel, \textit{Ariische Periode}, 270, and has been widely accepted by Iranists.

\(^{90}\) Whether the proper name Tītra/Tītra originally meant "Third" or was merely interpreted as having this meaning because it was a homonym of the ordinal number has been much discussed; see Rönnow, \textit{op. cit.}, xx-xxvii. In Zoroastrian tradition other Tītra's are known: a Tītra, son of Sāyuhrī (Yt. 5.72; 13.113); and a Tītra (Pahlavi Sīrī) who was a warrior at the time of Vīsāspa's ancestor, Kāvān Uṣan, and met his death from the \textit{dong-paurānd}, as we have seen above. (His story is given more fully by Christensen, \textit{Les Kayānīs}, 76-8). He is possibly to be identified with the warrior "Sīrī of the Vīraṇās" whose \textit{fravashi}, according to the \textit{Dīnavard (ed. Sanjana, Vol. XIV, VII.5.2-11, Madin, 46.17 f.}, see West, \textit{SBE XXVII}, 77-80), was released from heaven and, coming to Vīsāspa, bestowed a marvellous chariot on him, that needed no driver. The Sīrī of the time of Kāvān Uṣan is said to have been a seventh son, which, if true, would make it the less likely that the name originally meant "The Third".

(Vd.\textit{20.2}); but in the \textit{Farvārdīn Yašt}, v.\textit{131}, it is Thraētaona, "son of the house of Athwa" who is invoked for warding off fevers and maladies, and in living Zoroastrian observance it is he who, as King Frēdōn (Farīdūn), is turned to for help, through religious services, prayers and amulets, to keep away or cure sickness.

The suspicion that Thraētaona and Thraētaona were originally in some way closely associated (if not identical)\(^8\) is strengthened by the fact that the Vedas know a Tītra Āpta, a mythical savior who was the first to prepare \textit{soma}.\(^7\) Despite phonetic difficulties it has been suggested that Āpta and Athwa stem from a common original, namely an Indo-Iranian \*Aptjas, which yielded Av. Athwa by normal development, whereas Vedic Āptjas appears to have been influenced by popular etymology, through which the name came to be associated with \*āp- "water".\(^8\) It is undeniable that a great feat performed by Thraētaona Athwa is strikingly similar to one achieved by Tītra Āpta. The Iranian hero fights the dragon Aži Dāhaka, serpent-bodied, three-headed and six-eyed. The Indian Tītra overcomes the dragon Viśvarūpa, who likewise is serpent-bodied, three-headed and six-eyed. There is this difference, that Aži Dāhaka, like all other Iranian monsters, is a terrestrial beast which ravages this earth, whereas Viśvarūpa is conceived as a celestial one; but it seems that in Vedic tradition Tītra's deed became associated with Indra's slaying of Vītra, having possibly even provided the heroic prototype for this later myth, and then become contaminated by it. In India Tītra himself appears as a god, and the meaning of his name\(^8\) is emphasised by the evolution of two other Āptajas, Ekata and Dvīta (the First and Second). Popular etymology having connected the "family name"
Karšasp. According to this interpretation Thrita and Thraetaona, brothers, were both mortal men.

The existence of the Vedic parallels shows that the *Ātpjas must have lived in the Indo-Iranian period, presumably, that is, some time before at least the second millennium B.C.; and it is small wonder that with the passage of so many centuries they should have become almost (or, in India, entirely) superhuman figures, and their deeds wholly marvellous. Thraetaona is celebrated in Iran not only for a miraculous gift of healing, but also for performing two fabulous feats. One is the defeat of Aži Dahâka, whom, however, he did not slay but fettered, to live captive until the end of the world, when he will break free for the last great battle. (Whether this is an ancient feature of the story, to be linked with Norse and other myths of the bound monster and the end of the world, or a late development of Zoroastrian eschatology, is discussed in another chapter).

The other stupendous feat attributed to Thraetaona relates to one Pûrva, the “wise steersman”, whom he flew into the air so fiercely that he sped across the sky for three days and nights, until Arâdvî heard his prayer and rescued him, seizing him by the arms and bringing him safely down to earth, there to fulfill his vow of making 1000 libations to her at the river Râpha (Yt.5,61-5). The fact that the goddess succoured him suggests that Pûrva was not a wicked person, so this wonderful tale is probably an epic exaggeration of an incident in an actual fight between two warriors of old. (Minstrel-poets in general were reasonably chivalrous, and not given to blackening unduly a hero’s mortal foes.)

There is no indication from external sources as to when the other great Avestan hero, Karšasp, lived—no Indian parallels to assign him to remote antiquity, no link with any person known to history to set him in a later age. The facts, however, that many more stories are told of him than of Thraetaona, and that as well as accomplishing marvellous feats he is also celebrated in ordinary combat, suggest that he lived considerably later than the Āthyayas, and it has been suggested that the Gudha, the

tributary of the river Râpha at which he in his turn sacrificed (Yt.15,27), should be identified as a tributary of the Jaxartes (the *Sir-darya), (Earlier the name Râpha had presumably been used by the nomad Iranians for some other river; and Markwart suggested that the Râpha at which the older Pûrva made his thank-offerings to Arâdvî may have been the Volga.) Karšasp offered sacrifice also by lake Pisinâ (Yt.5,37), which tradition identifies with a lake near Kabûl, and the pairishâ who followed him is said to have been associated with Vâékârata, which is thought to be an ancient name for Gandhâra. From the Jaxartes to Gandhâra (around modern Peshawar and Jalalabad) is a very considerable distance; but Karšasp’s legend seems to have wandered among the Iranians of the north-east (as did, for instance, tales of Gothic Eormenric and Ostrogothic Theodic among the peoples of northern Europe), and to have acquired various local associations there. It is noteworthy that according to the Vendidad (I.17) the ancient Thraetaona (whose actual home was presumably on the Inner Asian steppes) was born in Varzma, which has been identified with Sakt. Varpu, modern Buner, and later Rustam, a Saka hero, became associated with places all over Iran. Such local connections must necessarily be regarded as historically valueless. Karšasp’s own standing epithet in the Avesta is nairvâna, *manâh “of manly mind, valiant”; and in later tradition this partly replaced his proper name, so that in the Persian epic he appears both in a minor role as Karšasp or Garšasp, and more prominently as Namân son of Sâm, who is represented (with the interweaving of diverse traditions found in the Book of Kings) as father of Zâl and grandfather of Rustam. Naturally neither of these two Saka heroes appears in the Avesta, and it was

Persian texts, see Darmesteter, ZA II, 626 n. 58; Christensen, Les Kayanides, 99-104, 129-32, and Le premier chapitre du Vendidad, 31-2. The Pahlavi text from Dinkard IX, together with that from the Persian Rûspâztart, has been edited and translated by Nyberg, Oriental studies in honour of C. E. Frothy, London 1933, 336-52.

This localisation is the corner-stone of Nyberg’s elaborate speculations on the hero, see his Religion, Index, s.v. Karšasp.

69 The genealogy provided for Thraetaona in GBD, XXXV.8 (BTA, 293-5) has, as West remarked (SBE V, 132 n. 8), a highly artificial appearance and seems devised simply to link him and his father through a suitable number of generations with Yima in the Zoroastrian “history” of the world.

80 See p. 283, below. The antiquity of the Scandinavian doctrine of the end of the world itself remains doubtful, see, e.g. Chadwick, *Cuml of Olheim, 13.

81 Thus in the yads (in passages probably representing indirectly a heroic tradition) the warrior-foes of the “Airyas” themselves petition the gods; and although their petitions are necessarily rejected, they still receive the same sort of complimentary epithets as the Aryan heroes, e.g., the “valiant sons of Vašâka” *Yt. 5,57. (On the special case of the Turan Frâzarseyan see further below.)

82 On the legend of Karšasp as it is preserved in the Avesta, and in Pahlavi and
evidently the artificial link with them which led to associations in later times of Karasasp Nariman with Seistan (Sakastan) in south-eastern Iran. This same link is found in the independent (but largely derivative) epic poem, the *Garštšp Nāma*.

According to legend, preserved in allusions in various passages of the Avesta, the curly-haired Karasasp, mighty in strength and armed with a great club or mace, succeeded in laying hold of the Khvarnah or Fortune as it left Yima of old. Like Thraetaona, he was helped in various exploits by the goddess Ardvi Sūrā and by Vayu. Some of these exploits appear to be the feats of a great warrior achieved against his peers. Thus he slew the nine sons of Pathanya, the sons of Nivika and Dāstātyānī, and Varāvā Dānayana and Pitaona, who were befriended by pairikās and the valiant Arzāv. Samana, strong and wise, and he avenged the death of his brother Urvākhsha upon his slayer, Hitāspā of the golden crown, whom he dragged behind his chariot. Other of his chronicled exploits were against fabulous creatures. Several of the monsters already mentioned—Gandarawa, the horn-handed Snāvidhaka, the bird Kamak—met their deaths at Karasasp’s hand. His most famous encounters, however, were with the horned dragon, Sruvara, whom eventually he slew.

Once he came upon this monster as it slept; and taking its vast green flank for the earth itself, he overgrewed with plants, he lit a fire upon it and began cooking his midday meal. The heat awoke the dragon, which rushed away, overturning the pot into the fire. Karasasp, affrighted, leapt clear; but he incurred thereby a sin, for the fire which he had kindled had been polluted, and according to tradition the god Ātār remained implacable towards him, until at long last Zoroaster himself, with Gaus Urvan, pleaded on his behalf and he was allowed to enter Paradise. (Gaus Urvan was concerned because the warrior-huntsman would have dedicated to him the animal whose flesh was in the pot.) Other wrongful acts seem to have been attributed to Karasasp, such as association with the pairikā Kháñatha, and (anachronistically) hostility to the Zoroastrian religion. Nevertheless this old warrior of pagan times remained one of the great heroes of Zoroastrianism. According to one legend, he is among those who never died, but is sleeping still; and at the end of the world he will awake to slay Aži Dâhâka as the monster breaks loose from the fetters with which Thraetaona bound it. Yet according to the story concerning his sin against fire, Karasasp died and his spirit passed a long age in the Zoroastrian limbo, exiled from Paradise. These two Zoroastrian developments of his legend perhaps belonged to different localities, and survive without being reconciled.

The legend of Karasasp thus shows a mixture, found generally in heroic story the world over, of historical fact (suitably enlarged and ennobled by poetic handling) with elements from folklore and popular superstition. In every country the tales of heroes tend to have certain common characteristics through being shaped within the one culture; and it is Iranian tradition, presumably, which brings about certain similarities in the legends of Thraetaona and Karasasp. Fighting dragons appears to have been among the feats which an Iranian hero was expected to
perform, and a dragon has its part even in the legend of Haosyanha, Hosang of the Persian epic, who seems essentially a “culture hero” rather than a warrior, one celebrated for discovering the arts and crafts needed by civilised man. Haosyanha has the epithet of Paradhatu, thought to mean the “first appointed,” appointed, that is, to rule over the world. In the yadis he is represented as praying to be allowed to rule all lands and all beings in them, and to destroy certain demons, “for the protection and governance of creation.” In the version of this story which appears in the Book of Kings he civilised the world, teaching men how to mine and work minerals, to irrigate and sow and reap; and one day he encountered a fire-breathing dragon with eyes like pools of blood, and boldly hurled a stone at it, driving it off. The stone struck a rock and produced fire for the benefit of mankind. Another culture hero is Takhma Urpi (Takhmûraf, Takhmûras of later tradition), who too in the Avesta seeks power over demons and men, and specifically the boon that he may ride the arch-fiend (in Zoroastrian tradition Angra Mainyu) as his horse from end to end of the earth. In the Book of Kings he also is represented as teaching mankind useful knowledge, such as how to tame certain of the wild birds and beasts, how to shear their newly-gathered flocks and to spin the wool for clothing. In the epic he is represented as the son of Hosang, and these two, with Gayomard, Yima and Thraetaona (Gayomard, Jamshed and Farzûd), Manus, Uthra (Manilûhr) and one or two lesser figures, form the legendary “dynasty” of the Paradhatu or Pîsdûdians. (It is interesting to note that, in contradistinction to Vedic tradition, not one of these beings is treated as a god.) It has been suggested that similarities in the stories of Haosyanha and Takhma Urpi may be due to these two being originally the culture heroes of different Iranian tribes. In the Faravardin Yasht, 143-4, five divisions are recognised among the Iranians, namely the Airya (a term which the Avestan people appear to use of themselves), Tûrya, Sairîm, Sûnûm and Dûhû. The eponymous founders of the second and third groups figure with “Airya” in the Pahlavi tradition as Tûr (older “Airyaîça), 166 (*Tûr(a)ça) and Sarm, who are represented as the three sons of Farzûd among whom he divided the world. In the Book of Kings they appear as Ariz, Tûr and Salm, of whom Ariz received the realm of Iran itself, Tûr the lands to north and east, and Salm those to the west; and ultimately the people of Tûr, the Turansians, were identified with the alien Turks, who came to replace the Iranians in those lands.

The other great heroes of the pagan “Avestan” tradition are the forbears of Zoroaster’s patron, Kavi Vîstasp. They were Aryan princes, and formed the Kavyân (Kavyânian) dynasty, which came to be presented as succeeding to the Paradhatu (Pîsdûdian). In Y.V.19 (v.71) seven of the kavis are celebrated as having been accompanied by Khvarvaz, so that all were valorous, strong and wise. An eighth, the great Haosravah, is celebrated separately (v.V.74-7), with certain of his exploits being named. In the Faravardin Yasht (v.132) the fravaštis of the eight are honoured. The Pahlavi tradition shows that these princes represented five generations; and in the Avesta, as also Haosravah (Kay Khosrau of the later epic), Usan/Usadhan (Kay Kayus) is especially prominent, for these two both appear among the other heroes of old who sought boons of the gods. More is told of them in the Pahlavi books and the Persian epic; and probably all this material derives ultimately from the oral traditions of Vîstasp’s own house. No distinction is made in the Avesta itself between these pagan ancestors of Vîstasp’s, or other pagan heroes, and the Zoroastrian princes and warriors who followed them, and who are honoured with them in the Faravardin and other yadis. This is a development which can be readily paralleled elsewhere in oral literature. (Thus, for example, in Anglo-Saxon and Norse poems which deal with both Christians and heathens, either all the persons speak as Christians, or none is made to do so. A uniformity prevails.) One finds, moreover, the same mixture of apparently historical fact with marvellous fiction in the tales of the pagan kavis as in those of other ancient heroes.

The most celebrated foe of the kavis, however, is no fabulous monster but another warrior prince, the “very strong” Fraprayan of the Tûrya people. Through the usual brief allusions in the Avesta (which can be
amplified from the later tradition\textsuperscript{134} one learns that Frapar nast was the foe of Kavi Usan, the third of the line. After quarrelling with his father, Usan’s son Syâyavarśan took refuge with Frapar nast and married one of his daughters. Subsequently Frapar nast’s brother Karasaravasa accused Syâyavarśan of treachery and he was put to death.\textsuperscript{135} Frapar nast also slew the “wicked Zainigā”, apparently a foe of the Aiyars; and for a time the royal Khvaranah dwelt with him (Yt.19.93), evidently because he established his power, briefly at least, over the Aiyars themselves. Eventually, however, Syâyavarśan’s son Haosravah, having reached manhood, avenged his father by slaying both Frapar nast and Karasaravasa (Yt.9.21; 19.77), and he re-established the rule of the kavis, the Khvaranah passing now to him. This act of vengeance is one only among the feats of Haosravah which are celebrated in the Avesta and tradition; but the greatness of this particular triumph is suggested by the fact that in order to achieve it he is said to have received physical help from Haoma (Yt.11.7; Yt.9.18). This and the rescue of Pāurva by Aradvī Sūrā are the only instances in the Avesta of physical intervention by divine beings, so common in Greek heroic stories. The tale of help from Haoma may originally in the pagan version have been a way of saying that Haosravah roused his fighting fury for the great combat with draughts of haoma, as Indian warriors did theirs with soma, for Frapar nast was clearly the most formidable of foes. In what must be one of the oldest parts of the Avesta the Tūriyān king is celebrated as having prodigious strength.\textsuperscript{136} He is said, moreover, to have possessed a fortress all of iron, built by him beneath the earth\textsuperscript{137} (presumably a poetic description of some impregnable stronghold). Since it is Kavyān poets who tell of Frapar nast and his deeds, he naturally appears, however, even in the oldest allusions, as less glorious than his opponents, although the Khvaranah is allowed to dwell with him; and in the developed Zoroastrian tradition, in which even the pagan kavis are cast as upholders of the Good Religion, he is presented as an arch-villain, with the standing epithet of marīra “deceitful”, one who deliberately opposes, not merely the kavis themselves, but all good works of Ahura Mazdā.\textsuperscript{138} He thus enters the ranks of the creatures of Angra Mainyu, like the various maleficent monsters of fable, and becomes virtually timeless, fighting in remote epochs against the legendary Pīśďānans, yet seeking also to seize the Khvaranah of Zoroaster himself (Yt.19.82); and in the Pahlavi Dinkard he is explicitly said to have become a dēv, for whom there is no hope of salvation.\textsuperscript{139} What one may assume to be the oldest layer of Avestan material shows clearly, however, that in fact the mighty warrior Frapar nast was a heroic figure, who flourished during the reign of Usan, the third of the kavis, and perished in that of their grandson Haosravah, Frapar nast’s daughter’s child.

Hostility between Tūriyā and Aiyrā is indicated also in the Farvardīn Yašt (vv. 37-8), where the frauvasīs of the just are said to give aid in battle against the Dānus, who appear to be a sept or clan of the Tūra people; and in Yt.5 (v.73) three warriors, presumably Aiyaras, ask Aradvī to help them overcome certain Tūriyān Dānus. In these circumstances much has been made of the appearance of a Tūra, Fryāna by name, at the court of Kavi Vištāspa himself. He became a follower of Zoroaster’s and is mentioned with praise in the Gāthās (Yt.46.12). There are, however, many instances from comparable cultures of a man of rank taking service under a foreign prince of renown, sometimes even when hostility existed between his own people and his new lord.\textsuperscript{140} Among the ancient Iranians there is the instance of Syâyavarśan himself, seeking refuge with his father’s enemy Frapar nast, and making his life among the Tūriyas. There is no need therefore to refine upon the appearance of a solitary Tūra noble at Vištāspa’s court.\textsuperscript{141} Two descendants of Fryāna are mentioned in the Younger Avesta. One, Yoštīa, was celebrated for a famous feat, not, in this instance, victory in physical combat but in a contest of wits, in which he solved all the riddling questions put to him by the wicked Akhya, a sorcerer seeking to gain power through his defeat. Yoštīa is represented as achieving this victory by favour of Aradvī (Yt.5.82), who, as we have seen, was able as a divinity of water to bestow wisdom; and a Pahlavi text sets out the

\textsuperscript{134} For the Pahlavi and later material see Darmesteter, ZA J, 111 n. 19; 112 n. 114; Christensen, Les Kayanides, 61-6, 109-17.
\textsuperscript{135} These details are known only from the later tradition, but harmonise with the Avestan statements that Syâyavarśan met his death through treachery by Frapar nast (Yt.9.18; 21; 19.77).
\textsuperscript{136} Yt.19.37, 38. Frapar nast shares the epithet afzardāha, “having prodigious strength”, with Kavi Usan (Yt.5.45).
\textsuperscript{137} Y.11.7, 14 pss. in the later tradition.
\textsuperscript{138} See especially Yt.19.58.
\textsuperscript{139} Dk. III.110.13 (citad by Casartelli, Philosophy, 135 n. 6).
\textsuperscript{140} See, e.g., Chadwick, The Heroic Age, 330, 359-1.
\textsuperscript{141} On this slight basis a remarkable edifice of theory was erected by Nyberg and added to by Wikander. This Fryāna of the Gāthā and Yoštīa Fryāna (see below) are the only two men of this line identified in the Avesta (the Pahlavi tradition adds a third, see also below), and very little is known of either of them. But Nyberg arbitrarily assigned to their family or sept various other persons named Zoroaster (ibid., 248 f), seeing the Fryānas as the community among whom the prophet practised his “Religionspolitik” (ibid., p. 263). He located them upon the Jaxartes (p. 252), and named Aradvī as their especial goddess (p. 261), with Karosāspa as their great hero (pp. 300, 307). They are held early to have adopted Vayu as their supreme god (p. 306) and according to Wikander (Vayu, passim) there can be found in Yt.15 traces of a “Fryāna” dialect as well as a “Fryāna” religion. All this belongs to the realm of fantasy.
details of the encounter.\textsuperscript{142} His fravaši is honoured in the \textit{Farvardin Yat}, v.120; and in the same verse Ašam, yahmāštā is reverenced, who according to Pahlavi tradition was also a Fryāna.\textsuperscript{143} His name, meaning “To whom righteousness according to desire”, stems from Zoroaster’s own words (Y.43.1).

The heroic material in the Avestan 
\textit{yašt}s appears to derive from the traditions of different Iranian peoples over many generations; and it is only possible tentatively to distinguish historical fact and accurate genealogies from poetic fiction and fable. Personal names are probably reliable, but place names appear of doubtful value, since they often seem to have wandered with the wandering peoples or to have been newly associated with ancient stories. In the mass of material which has descended from pagan times there are seemingly preserved both secular and priestly traditions, transmitted by minstrel poets as well as by religious schools; and there are elements also of popular superstition and dread, in the tales of demons and witches and fearsome beasts. These intermingle with the stories of valour, which show also the power of the gods to grant men’s prayers and succour them in distress. All this provided a rich inheritance for the Zoroastrian priests of later times, when they came to develop a history of the world in accordance with the prophet’s great vision of it as a place continually divided between the warring forces of good and evil; and hence something of the content of pagan Iranian literature and tradition came to be preserved in the Zoroastrian holy books.

\textsuperscript{142} Published by M. Haug and E. W. West as Appendix I to \textit{The Book of Arda Viraf}, Bombay and London, 1872, 205-66. On riddle literature in general, as a widespread oral genre, see Chadwick, \textit{Growth of Literature} III, 1944 ff.

\textsuperscript{143} Dākša in dāg, Pārsa. 89.3, see West, \textit{SBE} XVIII, 256 n. 3.

\textbf{CHAPTER FOUR}

\textbf{DEATH, THE HEREAFTER AND FUNERAL RITES}

Evidently no single exclusive belief was held by the Indo-Iranians about death and the hereafter. For them as for other peoples different concepts co-existed. It is clear, however, from the evidence of both the Vedas and the most archaic Avestan texts that the continuance of life after death was something taken for granted, as self-evident and not open to question. It was only about its nature and place that there was a divergence of beliefs and hopes and fears.\textsuperscript{1}

It is now generally accepted that the old funeral practice of the Indo-Iranians was burial. This lies remotely behind a number of Indian rituals and texts, and is the general practice attested for the pagan Iranians.\textsuperscript{2} Even the Zoroastrian word \textit{dakhma}, used later for the place where corpses were exposed, comes, it seems, not (as used to be thought) from the base \textit{dagh} “burn”, but through *\textit{dafma} from the IE base *\textit{dhmbh} “bury”.\textsuperscript{3} This ancient rite of burial appears to have been associated with an equally ancient concept of a home of the spirits of the dead beneath the earth; and a passage in Herodotus (VII.114) shows that belief in the god of this subterranean kingdom of the dead survived among the Iranians into Achaemenian times: “I learn that Aremis, the wife of Xerxes, when she grew old, buried alive fourteen children of distinguished Persians, endeavour-

\textsuperscript{1} The conclusions reached by Oldenberg in this section of his study of Vedic religion were to a large extent adopted and developed, with valuable additional data, by E. Artham, “Tod und Unsterblichkeit in vedischen Glauben”, \textit{I. Arb.} XXXV, 1927, 330-97, II. XXVI, 1928, 187-249, e.g. for further bibliography.

\textsuperscript{2} See, e.g., Herodotus I.140; III.62; IV.21; VII.117; Arrian, \textit{Anabasis} VI.29.5. The account in Herodotus VIII.24 of how after Thermopylae Xerxes had all but a thousand of the slain from his army buried in trenches, in order to conceal the true numbers of his dead, has of course no general significance. After the slaughter of the citizens of Kerman by Afghan invaders in the 18th century the Zoroastrians there were obliged by the sheer number of corpses to bury their dead, and this “\textit{dakhma}”, an enclosed mound of earth, can still be seen. Doubt is generally felt about the words attributed to Xenophon (\textit{Cyropaedia} VIII, 2.23) to Cyrus the Younger, whom he represents as agnostic about the future existence of the soul, asking that his body should be restored to the earth so that he might become part of her, she being “the benefactor of mankind”. With regard to the term used by Onesicritus (recorded by Strabo, XLI,51.3) that down to the time of Alexander the inhabitants of Bactria disposed of their dying simply by flinging them to dogs in the streets see Henning, \textit{Zoroaster}, 20-2; W. W. Tarn, \textit{The Greeks in Bactria and India}, Cambridge 1938, 114-6. In general on what is known of ancient Persian funeral customs see A. Rapp, \textit{ZDMG} XIX, 1865, 132-XX, 53-5; K. A. Inostantsev, “On the Ancient Iranian burial customs...”, transl. by L. Bogdanov, \textit{JCOF} 3, 1923, 1-28; L. H. Gray, \textit{ERE} IV, 505.

\textsuperscript{3} See K. Hoffmann, \textit{KZ} LXXIX, 1905, 238.
ing to propitiate on her own account the god who is said to dwell beneath the earth." 4 As for ancient India, in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (XIII.8.1. 20) it is said: "The (world of) the Fathers [i.e. the departed ancestors] is truly the world of the plants. To the roots of the plants they (the Fathers) go." 5 In the Indian texts the paths that the gods traverse, the devayāna, which unite earth with heaven, are often distinguished from the "deep paths" which the Fathers take, the Jayāyāna. 6 The latter are said in a number of passages to "downward" ways, leading to a world below.

Yet in the Vedas the place of the dead which is chiefly spoken of is on high, in the sky; and it is widely held that the Indian funeral rite of burning the body developed in harmony with this later doctrine, the spirit (it was thought) being released to fly upward with the flames. 7 It ascended to the third heaven, there to dwell with Varuṇa and Yama in a state of bliss, enjoying sun and light, soma, milk and honey, songs and melody and the joys of love. 8 That such happiness could be experienced by a disembodied spirit was plainly inconceivable; and the Vedic Indians held that the physical body, its flesh destroyed by fire, was recreated and raised up, to be united again with the soul in Paradise. 9 For this reason the bones were carefully collected from the funeral pyre, and any that were missing were symbolically replaced so that nothing should be lacking for this resurrection, which (it seems) was thought of as taking place soon after the soul's ascent. The characteristic funerary practice of North India in the Iron Age has been shown to be post-cremation burial in urns or pits. 10

The rite of cremation is barely attested among the Iranians (and in one of the two instances recorded it is represented as an act of deliberate desecration 11); but as far as beliefs are concerned, traces in the Avesta suggest

4 On this passage see Moniton, EZ, 57. Sacrifices to a god of the dead to prolong the sacrificer's own life are well known from other lands. Cf., e.g., the story in the Vöinga Saga, 29, that Ann, king of Sweden, sacrificed to Óthin one of his own sons every tenth year, thus obtaining ninety additional years of life (see Chadwick, Cult of Óthin, 4).
5 See Thieme, Studien zur ind. Weltanschauung, 57; Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 421-2. For various other traces in the Vedas of the idea of the dead dwelling in the earth, either actually at the place of burial or in an underworld, see Keith, ibid., 410-15.
7 See Oldenberg, Rel., 549: Arman, art. cit. I, 359-360. A similar development appears to have taken place, e.g., in Scandinavia in antiquity, for when the conception of an after-life in Valholl replaced that of one spent by the spirit in its grave-mound, then cremation replaced the old practice of lowe-burial. See Chadwick, Cult of Óthin, 57-61.
8 See Oldenberg, Rel., 355-36; Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 407; Arman, art. cit. I, 339-40.
9 See Oldenberg, Rel., 529-30; Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 405-6; Arman, art. cit. I, 339-40; Gonda, Rel. Ind. Ind. 1, 151.
11 Herodotus III.10, where Cambyses is said to have dishonoured the embalmed body that the pagan Iranians shared the Vedic hope of a future life in Paradise, full of light and happiness and physical delights. 12 In a fragment of the Ḥādhokht Naš which describes the arrival of the soul in Paradise it is stated that it is there offered spring butter to eat—the most delicious, evidently, of pastoral foods; 13 and in Yasna 16.7 it is said: "We worship the sun possessing abodes of aša, in which dwell the souls of the dead... the Best Existence (i.e. Paradise) of the followers of aša... (which is) light and affording all comforts." In the Vedas the sacrificers of horses, that is, the highly meritorious, are said to dwell near the sun, whose brightness makes this a place of the highest reward; 14 and in both literatures there is emphasis on the light and radiance of Paradise, in contrast (presumably) to the "blind darkness" of the subterranean kingdom of the dead.

These similarities between Indian and Iranian belief make it appear that hope of such salvation on high was conceived already in the Indo-Iranian period, when presumably priestly ponderings on the immortality and blessedness of the heavenly gods prompted longings for a better lot in the hereafter for men also. 15 It is possible therefore that an aristocratic funeral custom attested among the Iranians in antiquity was also connected with this belief. This is the costly rite whereby the body was embalmed and laid in a tomb-chamber 16, either free-standing on a stone plinth, like Cyrus' tomb at Pasargadae, or cut in living rock, like those of the succeeding Achaemenians, or resting on the ground and covered with a great

of the Egyptian king Amasis by having it burnt. "This was truly an impious command to give" he comments "for the Persians hold fire to be a god, ... and say it is wrong to defile my own hands I buried him. If of truth the dead can leave their graves, expect Astyages the Mede to rise and fight against you; but if the course of nature be the same as formerly, then be sure no ill will ever come upon you from this quarter." But this need be no more than a strong asseveration of the fact of death. Corpses do not rise up again in this world, which was all that immediately concerned Prexaspes and his questioner.

12 Ḥādhokht Naš 11.8; see Haug and West, The Book of Arda Viraf, appendix II, 292/314.
13 See Oldenberg, Rel., 534. On the monthly horse-sacrifice at the tomb of Cyrus see below.
14 See Arman, art. cit. II, 231-32.
15 Oldenburg, Rel., 134, argued that the early Achaemenians did not believe in a resurrection of the body, basing this opinion on the words attributed to Prexaspes (Herodotus, III.62) when he avowed to Cambyses that he had slain his brother Smerdas: "With my own hands I buried him. If of truth the dead can leave their graves, expect Astyages the Mede to rise and fight against you; but if the course of nature be the same as formerly, then be sure no ill will ever come upon you from this quarter." But this need be no more than a strong asseveration of the fact of death. Corpses do not rise up again in this world, which was all that immediately concerned Prexaspes and his questioner.
mound of stones and earth, like those of the Saka princes. Even in the last instance the earth did not press upon the body, but space was left around and above it in the chamber; and possibly the custom of preserving the body and entombing it like this was linked with the hope that both spirit and flesh would in due course ascend to immortality above. Yet as late as the fifth century B.C. Herodotus records Persian practices which show that belief in an underworld kingdom of the dead persisted. We have already met Amestris’ sacrifice through burial alive of chosen victims; and with it Herodotus records another such sacrifice of youths and maidens, observing “Burying alive is a Persian custom”. From these instances it would appear that priests and nobles, while hoping for heaven for themselves, still believed in a general after-life beneath the earth, and were prepared on occasion to propitiate the ancient lord of darkness by sending him other humans to people his realm, whose bodies were laid in earth as the nearest gateway to his abode. This evidence of dual beliefs accords with the deduction made by Vedic scholars that originally, and for countless generations, the Indians restricted hope of Paradise to the leading members of their community, to princes and warriors and priests—to those, that is, who had the means or knowledge necessary to win the favour of the gods. Presumably therefore, when Amestris sacrificed the “children of distinguished Persians” rather than foreign captives or commoners, she was making a choice offering to the god of the underworld, the more surely to buy her own salvation.

In the case of natural death a distinction appears between the funerary rites of noble and commoner, which was perhaps not solely dictated by a difference in means. Thus the impressive funerary chambers of Saka princes are associated with many humbler burials set directly within the earth.

Archaeologists have found that the rite of cremation was practised in the late Bronze Age by bearers of the Andronovo culture in Central Asia, who may possibly have been Indian peoples on their slow way south.

Immense burial grounds have, however, been discovered there from the same time and in association with the same culture, which perhaps belonged to Iranian peoples;22 and on the Iranian plateau a “vast cemetery” is known associated with the presumed Iranian occupation of Tepe Sialk. It seems, therefore, that burial was still the ordinary funerary practice of the Iranians when they invaded their new home; and that whereas among the Indians this rite yielded to cremation followed by interment of the bones, in Iran it was replaced more gradually by exposure, similarly followed by interment of the skeletal remains. There appears to be no evidence for this latter practice before the first millennium B.C.; and it is earliest attested in Central Asia itself, and in Eastern Iran.24 It has been suggested that it may indeed have evolved in Central Asia, which was a region particularly favourable to it, with its dry air and stretches of desert between oasis settlements;25 and it is possible that it developed, like the Indian rite of cremation, in connection with belief in an after-life in heaven, an ascent to Paradise above. For different though the two observances are, both seem linked with a common desire to release the soul swiftly and allow it to mount upwards, free from the body, instead of being shut down with the corpse beneath the earth. Still today those Zoroastrians who maintain the rite of exposure think of it in terms of the body lying in sunlight instead of being thrust into darkness under the soil. Essential stress is laid on the need for the “life-giving” sun to shine upon it;26 and the

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23 See Grahainman, Faihailles de Sialk prix de Kishan, Paris 1938-9; and briefly in his Iran, London 1956, 77-83.
24 From Achaemenid times (e.g. at Kalaly-Gur) and onwards the rite is well attested in Central Asia, see, with references, Frunkin, Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia, 22, 92 (Kalaly-Gur), 96, 99-103, 113, 125, 151. “Post-exorcism” burials in Iran are usually placed in caissons and stone enclosures from early date were found by Aurl Stein in Baluchistan, see his account in Memos of the Archaeological Survey of India 43, Calcutta 1931, 77-82. Down to the present century the Irans. Aster of Afghanistan disposed of their dead by exposing them in wooden coffins on mountain tops (see Chr. Lassen, Indische Alterthumskunde 2, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1867, 220; cited by Söderblom, ERE IV, 504): but it seems likely that this is a local derivative of Zoroastrian observances. It has been suggested that exposure should be regarded as a characteristic nomad rite, and parallels of a sort have been adduced from among the Turks of Central and N.E. Asia, as well as from Mongolia and Tibet (see, with references, Ioannaghan, JCS 3, 1933, 9-11); but none of these parallels is pre-Zoroastrian, and the nomadic Scythians do not appear to have practised any such observance. (On Greek reports of Bactrian customs see above, p. 109 n. 2. Those attributed to the Mandaean are also pre-Zoroastrian, as well as being particular in character.)
26 See Yd., 513, 743, and the Pahlavi gloss on Yd. 3.9 (Darmesteter, ZdH IV, 46 n. 15) where it is lamented that men should be buried “beneath the ground, not being beheld by the sun... for this (spirit?) which has been in the sun’s beholding has greater hope (of Paradise)” (sahr zamín, ni khowa khlidé nigirin... it tê tê pad khowa khlidé nigirin be tê, têlôvandar). In the Pahl. Rv. of Atarfarbag, CXVIII (BTA, Bombay 1959, text, 165/137, transl., 1110) it is assumed that the purpose of digging up a dead body would be to expose it to the sun. For a purely practical explanation of the need for this exposure see...
fundamental pagan concept was probably that the sun drew the released soul upward into the sky—the Iranians’ veneration of fire being too great, evidently, to allow them to make a fire-path for the ascending spirit, as their Indian cousins did. Hence comes, presumably, the Zoroastrian usage whereby no corpse is ever carried to the place of exposure between sunset and sunrise—although formerly, when beasts of prey helped to devour the dead, the hours of darkness might otherwise have seemed as practical as those of day. Both peoples had, however, to reconcile this hope of an immediate ascent of the spirit with the evidently older doctrine that it lingered on the earth for three days after death, before departing downward to the underground kingdom of the dead. There seems little chance that a sufficiently firm chronology will ever be established for it to be known whether exposure was practised in Central Asia before Zoroaster’s day; but the likelihood appears to be that the prophet, with the courage to innovate given him by his revelation, either evolved this rite or fostered it in connection with his own doctrines, because of the eschatological hope which it represented. Funerary customs are notoriously hard to change, however, even with a change of beliefs; and even in the aristocratic Rigveda there are still references to the rite of inhumation. One funeral hymn survives, for instance, in which a warrior is said to be laid in the ground, which is besought to cover him “as a mother wraps her skirt around her child” (RV 10.18.11). In pagan Iran too some nobles may have preferred simple interment to embalming or exposure, as being the custom of their forefathers, or because they preferred their spirits to remain close to their descendants on this familiar earth, rather than being released to ascend to an unknown heaven.

As for entry into heaven, it is said in the Rigveda that Paradise is a place “where they sit who have done good” (RV 10.17.4), but it seems likely that by this was meant those who had been punctilious in religious observance, the generous sacrificers, the open-handed givers of largesse, rather than those distinguished by ethical attainment. Nevertheless, the doctrine that a place in Paradise had to be earned must have carried the corollary that any other destination was for the less deserving; and scholars have accordingly been exercised as to whether a belief in Hell can be found already in the Rigveda. Oldenberg was inclined to interpret the few problematic passages which exist as justifying such an interpretation; and Konow, agreeing, linked the supposed doctrine with the evolution of the ethical Asuric religion of the Indo-Iranians. The place of retribution was, he suggested, thought of as one into which the Lords of heaven cast sinners, as earthly kings cast malefactors into jail. Jails hardly form part of a nomad tradition, however; and although such a doctrine can be clearly established for later times, no certain evidence for it can be found in the Rigveda. For the earliest period in India there seem to have been only the two beliefs, one in a joyful existence in Paradise above, the other in a shadowy, joyless one beneath the earth. It is the latter, Arman suggests, which was called “death” by the Vedic Indian, who wished it, along with all other evils, in maledictions upon his foe; and it was from this “death” that he himself sought to escape, by due observances, sacrifices and prayers. Indeed it is thought that many of the Vedic rituals (like a number of Zoroastrian ones still today) were performed with the hope of thereby obtaining “immortality”, that is, a happy hereafter in the kingdom of heaven, instead of death or mere grey continuance, which was the evil thing, the pâpmân, that was dreaded by the bravest of men. Similarly in the ancient Iranian Yasna Haplihâlî the worshippers seek ardently for “life (gâya- and corporeality (astmâd-) in both worlds” (Y.41.3), longing by implication to escape the underworld kingdom of insubstantial “death”. Yet plainly “the more people accustomed themselves to making entry into heaven dependent on certain . . . qualifications and to seeing in it a reward for the good behaviour of men upon earth, the

Dâdestân ed evang., Pars. XVI.11 (ed. Dhabhar, 37; transl. West, SBE XVIII, 40). In general on the references to burial in the Vendidad see Humbach, “Bestattungsformen im Vidvâd”, KZ LIX/II, 1938, 99-105; A. Ramm, Totenvorschriften . . . im Vidvâd”, ZDMG CVIII, 1938, 304-7; and further below, Ch. 12, Appendix.
77 On this hymn see W. Caland, Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche, Amsterdam 1896, 164; Geldner, Der Rigveda, S. 152. On the very slight archaeological evidence (more deductive than circumstantial) for inhumation in Rigvedic times see S. Piggott, Prehistoric India, 286-7.
78 Among the pagan Scandinavians the rite of cremation, once introduced, was not universally adopted or maintained, certain Danish kings, for example, reverting to hove-burial, apparently in order to remain in death among their people, see Chadwick, Cult of Odin, 57-61.
20 See Oldenberg, Rel., 536.

Death, the Hereafter and Funeral Rites

For a bibliography of the discussion see Arman, art. cit., 1, 342-5.
81 See his Rel., 537-40 and cf. Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 409-10.
82 Die Indier, 541.
84 Notably the ceremony of gîlkhârad, the “world purchased”, by which a man or woman can hope to “purchase” salvation in the world to come. See GBd. XXXIV.26 (transl. BTA, 241); Sadjar Ed., XXI.4, 10-11 (ed. Dhabhar, 112, 113; transl. Dhabhar, Rûstâvats, 534); Modii, CC, 406-7. On Vedic ideas of securing salvation from death see Rodhe, Delivs us from evol, 85 ff.
85 See Arman, art. cit., 1, 378, 384. The question of “immortality” is however complicated, since amslatbars, although often thus rendered, is literally “not dying”, and can also be used for long life on earth, or continuance through descendants here. See Rodhe, op. cit., 81 ff.
86 Cf. Y. 15.3; 40.2: 41.2, 6 (all passages concerned with the two worlds—this one and Paradise on high).
more they also became inclined to see in the descent into the kingdom of the dead a consequence of past sins. This by no means signifies that the concept of the kingdom of the dead was simply replaced by that of Hell. Rather the two ideas lived on side by side and independently. Thus the later Vedic literature... knows well both a general kingdom of the dead and also a hell*-...a hell which was often conceived as an especial part of the underworld. A parallel development, on a strictly ethical pattern, can be seen in Zoroaster's own teachings concerning the hereafter, according to which there were three abodes, Heaven, Hell and a shadowy between-place for the morally indifferent, whose inhabitants knew neither joy nor pain, but merely existence.

Once hope had developed of a happy life in sunlit heaven, the negative kingdom of the dead must have come to seem more dreadful in itself, even without the presence of torments. It is probable, moreover, that ancient imaginings early created a number of ghostly terrors that made the way there the more fearsome. There seems to have been a common old belief in some dangerous crossing-place, possibly of an underground lake or river; and associated with this there was apparently a myth of a pair of "four-eyed" dogs by whom the spirit must pass to reach even the drear haven of the kingdom of the dead. In India these hounds were associated with Yama, who, as we have seen, was regarded there as lord of the underworld, and indeed as Death itself. This concept of him continued (and continues) in popular belief in India and among Buddhists, but in the literary and aristocratic Rigveda Yama appears more often as a mild king of the blessed, dwelling with Varuṇa in the third heaven, playing upon a flute beneath a fig-tree. Evidently the development of belief in an after-life in Paradise had led to his translation from his ancient subterranean kingdom to heaven above. "Too closely linked with the 'Fathers' to be excluded from their company, he was elevated to be the king of Paradise". The "four-eyed" dogs, Yama's messengers, which had lurked, Cerberus-like, on the dark ways of death now became guardians of the Vedic Paradise of Light. In Iran too Yima is sometimes found in

Paradise on high; and there the place of the dogs is at the Činvatō Porštā. This name means (it seems) "The crossing of the Separator". Porštā can denote crossings of various kinds, and it is possible that in the remote past/this term was used of a ford or ferry-place over underground waters, and that it was with the development of belief in Paradise on high that it became a bridge over an abyss, of which one end rested on the highest peak of earth, the other on the road to heaven. Paradise itself (to judge from the Vedas) was thought of as ruled over by the Asuras/Ähuras; and there can be no doubt that it was to their "kingdom" that those souls were held to go who were āšāvan/āravān, that is, who had acted and worshipped in accordance with āšā during their lives: "The man who behaves according to the law... established, and worships... in proper style in accord with ārta, becomes happy while living, and āravān when dead".

What complicates matters further for the study of Iranian beliefs about the hereafter is the use of two distinct terms for the departed spirit which, although they often appear as synonyms in the later Zoroastrian scriptures, seem in origin to have been in a measure distinct. Both are of doubtful etymology. One, āravān, was used generally for the spirits of dead men and animals. Thus in the archaic Yasna Haft-yajñaiti the worshippers reverence "our souls and (those) of domestic animals which nourish us" (ahmakšing... āravān pasukānaṃcā yāhī nā jīṣijātī) (Y. 39.1). The divinity which is the sum of the souls of sacrificed animals is called Gā́šūr Āravān, "The Soul of the Bull". Originally, it seems, animal souls which had been consecrated were held, like those of men, to make their way downward into the hereafter, to graze the shadowy pastures of "Yima of the good herds". Presumably, therefore, āravān originally meant the disembodied spirit which went to dwell beneath the earth. The other term is fravāšt, derived from an Old Iranian *fravarti. Both the literal meaning of this word, and the significance of the concept, have been matter for prolonged

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37 Arbman, art. cit. II, 233.
38 Cf. the later Greek concept of places of punishment within Hades.
39 See Arbman, II, 235; Thieme, Studien zur ind. Wortkunde, 53.
40 On the hounds of Yama see Oldenberg, Rel., 538; Keith, Rel. and Phil. II, 406-7; Arbman, art. cit. II, 217-9. They are known only from the Rigveda. More generally on dogs of death see B. Schlerath, "Der Hund bei den Indogermanen", Fasoldia VI, 1954, 25-40.
41 See Arbman, art. cit. II, 224 n. 1.
42 Ibid., II, 223.
For summaries of some of the numerous interpretations, with references, see Moulton, EZ, 271 n. 1; Gray, Foundations, 77-9; G. Gropp, Wiederholungsformen im Jarg-Avesta, Hamburg 1966, 37. For a bibliography on the fravashi in general see Moulton, EZ, 256 n. 1.

See his introduction to Yt. 13 in Die Avesta, 264 ff. Similarly Corbin, Eravami-Jahrbuch XX, 1951, 169.

"Les Fravashi", in RHR XxXxIII, 1899, 239-60: II, ibid., 373-418.

EZ, 270.

Zor, Problems, 109.

Like the Valkyries, and an inhabitant of the air rather than one dwelling beneath the ground, who was swift to fly to the help of those of its kind who had satisfied it with prayers and offerings. Probably, though, there were resemblances from the earliest times in ritual and observances between a specialised fravashi-cult and the general cult of the urvan, and these must have helped beliefs about the two to blur and mingle. The development of the concept of a Paradise in the sky was presumably another factor leading to confusion. If the fravashi is in fact by origin a hero-spirit, one would expect it to be the fravashi who would be first thought of as dwelling with the gods, but it is actually the urvan who is chiefly associated with Paradise. Possibly an age-old belief in the fravashi as ever-present helpers and guardians prevented their being readily conceived as having a dwelling remoter than the surrounding air; and it may also have been difficult to reconcile the idea of these winged beings with the presumably later doctrine of a resurrection of the body. Even in the more recent texts of the Younger Avesta phrases occur which suggest that the fravashi were thought of as living here below, for example Y.23.3: "I summon to the sacrifice the fravashi of each just person, wherever it may be upon this earth..."

The oldest Avestan mention of the fravashi is in Yasna Haithfähigät. Here, as we have seen, in one passage the worshippers reverence their own souls (uruno), the urvan being, it seems, the possession of every man; but in another (Y.37.3) they honour Ahura Mazda himself together with "the fravashi of the just" (aštavanâm fravashi). What distinction existed at this stage between the two concepts there is no means of knowing. The long hymn to the fravashi, the Farvardin Yašt (Yt.13), appears to be in part very ancient, in part strongly Zoroastrian; and here the beliefs in fravashi and urvan seem both separate and yet partially fused. In the later Avesta, as in modern usage, the identification tends to be complete, and the formula occurs: "We worship the souls of the dead, which are the fravashi of the just" (iristavanâm urvanô yazamidae yd aštavanâm fravashayô). Even in the case of such an evidently ancient concept as Gânu Urvan, there occurs very occasionally in late passages the alternative expression Gânu Fravashi. In all Zoroastrian invocations of the fravashi they are addressed as aštavan. This epithet, as we have seen, had an especial significance in
pagan times as indicating the blessed dead; and it may be old custom that the *puroṣāra* were regularly so described, in courtesy and hope, by their descendants. It is, however, also possible that it became invariable usage after the ancient pagan cult was assimilated by Zoroaster to his own ethical teachings.

The original belief about the *urvan*, conceived as inhabiting the shadowy underworld, was plainly that it lived there hapless and deprived, dependent on its kinsmen and descendants for comfort and sustenance. Not for such ghosts the delicate foods or "wish cows" of Paradise; they must look to those living still on earth to satisfy their hunger and to clothe them. Offerings for this purpose had to be made ritually and at specified times, in order that they should reach the spirits through the barrier of matter; and so ancient and deep-engrained were the customs concerned that they survived the change of belief in the destiny of the departed, and to this day gifts of food and clothing are still made by Zoroastrian and Brahman alike for the benefit of souls in Paradise. This anomaly existed already in ancient times, for it is plain that both Vedic Indians and pagan Iranians believed that the blessed obtain "not only long life there by the gift of the mercy of the gods; they obtain the merit of . . . the sacrifices which they have offered, and the gifts which they have given to the priest, and at the same time they are nourished by the piety of their relatives on earth, as they have nourished in their turn their forefathers". The spirits thus enjoy offerings made directly to them in the present, in ritual manner, or given to priests on their behalf. If food, for example, is placed abundantly before priests, the soul in heaven benefits. Among the Iranians it is likewise held that food given ritually to a dog, who in a mysterious way represents the spirit world, will reach the departed soul.

The rites for the soul are especially numerous in the first year after death. During this time the spirit was called in India a *prela*, a "departed one", and was thought of as not yet fully accepted into the community of the Fathers. Exactly the same belief persisted among Zoroastrians, namely that the newly-departed soul led at first a somewhat separate existence. The responsibility for performing the rites on its behalf devolved upon the dead man's next-of-kin or heir, and he should maintain them for at least 30 years. These three decades may be regarded simply as the span of a generation, each son thus performing the rites for his father; but it is a striking fact, pointed out long ago by A. Kaegi, that many Indian and Iranian rituals concerning the dead occur in triplicate or in multiples of three. Comparing these practices with similar ones among the Greeks and other Indo-European peoples, he argued for their great antiquity, "the religious feeling of antiquity . . . being most deeply expressed and richly developed in catholic ministrations" and the immense conservativeness generally of the Indians and Iranians, and the similarity of their traditions in these matters, makes it virtually certain that living observances are still essentially those of ancient days. Among the Zoroastrians the initial rituals, which are many and prolonged, last for three days, during which the soul is thought to remain near the place of death or disposal of the body. At this time the family fasts (or now, since the Zoroastrians disapprove of fasting, abstains from flesh), and in pagan days undoubtedly gave themselves up to demonstrations of grief. On the third night three religious offices are said for the soul, during which a complete suit of clothing is consecrated for its use. On the third day an animal sacrifice is offered on behalf of the soul and the fat offering from it is given to fire on the fourth day at sunrise, when the soul is drawn up with the sun's rays to make the journey to its new abode. Offerings are consecrated for it daily during the first 30 days, after which a second blood sacrifice takes place; and then offerings are made every 30th day (or month by month) until the end of the first year (formerly 360 days). Then another solemn ritual is performed with a third animal sacrifice, and offerings again of food and clothing. This concludes the observances of the first year. After that there is an annual ceremony with consecration of food-offerings year by year upon the day of death, for the thirty stipulated years.

The above are evidently the old essential rituals, since they were in the

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64 A. Kaegi, "Die Neunzahl bei den Ostasiern", *Philologische Abhandlungen Heinrich Schneidewin-Sidler zur Feier, Zürich 1891*, 50-70 (a reference I owe to the kindness of Professor R. E. Emmerick).
65 Ibid., 50.
66 With regard to the whereabouts of the soul during this time, the Zoroastrian authorities differ as to whether this was at the place of death, or the *dakhna*, or the nearest sacred fire. On the Zoroastrian rituals see Kaegi, art. cit., 57 ff.; Modir, *CC*, 72-82, 402-4; A. V. W. Jackson, *Peria past and present*, 387-90; Söderblom, *ERE IV*, 502-4. On the Indian ones see Kaegi, ibid., 47-4; W. Caland, *Avestischer Abhang**, Leiden 1893.
67 Wild demonstrations of grief among the Achaemenid Persians and other Iranians are nevertheless sometimes described by the Greek historians, see, e.g., Herodotus *IX*, 54.
68 See Modir, *CC*, 81; Jackson, op. cit., 395 with n. 1.
69 Nowadays it is Parsi practice, which is being adopted also by the Indian Zoroastrians, to offer sandalwood to a sacred fire at dawn on the fourth day, instead of this ancient form of *ebāra*, on which see further in Ch. 6.
main observed by Brahman and Zoroastrian alike; but naturally they have often been elaborated in the case of an exalted person. Thus Arrian relates that a horse-sacrifice was made every month at the tomb of Cyrus the Great—*the sacrifice which according to the Vedas ensured the spirit a place near the sun. This observance, he states, was instituted in the reign of Cyrus' son Cambyses, and maintained continually by the same family of priests until the conquest by Alexander, a period of some 200 years. In modern times the annual ceremony for the soul of a great man has sometimes likewise been maintained over a long period. The most notable instance is that of the great Parsi priest, Dastur Meherji Rana, who died in the late 16th century A.C., for his anniversary ceremony is still performed by his lineal descendants in Navsari. The whole Zoroastrian community still keeps the annual observance for the soul of Zoroaster himself, which has thus been maintained over a span of perhaps three thousand years. The general practice, however, is that after a period of thirty years the departed soul receives only its share of the offerings and rites which are dedicated to "all souls", that is, to the company of the *fravāsī of the righteous, known in Middle Persian as *ardāy fravāš or *ardāy fravahr.  

Each year in ancient Iran a great festival was held which was dedicated to all the *fravāsī. This was known by the still unexplained name of Hamaspathamādaya, and took place (like the festival of the dead in various other lands) on the last night of the year. During the Sasanian period, because of confusions arising from calendar-changes, the observance was greatly extended and came to last 10 days. These days were named "the *fravāšī days", *Rōzan Fravardīgān; and it is as Fravardīgān or Farvardīgān that the festival is now best known. Apart from this alteration in duration and name, the Iranian feast of All Souls appears to have changed hardly at all down the centuries. *Yi.13.49-52 describes it in the following words: "We worship the good, mighty, bounteous *fravāš of the just, who hasten to (their) homes at the time of Hamaspathamādaya, then they wander here for the *whole night, wanting to experience this help: 'Who will praise us, who worship, who sing, who bless (us)? Who will acknowledge (us) with hands holding meat and clothing, with *āsa-attaining worship? The name of which of us will here be praised, the soul of which of *us will be worshipped, to which of us will that gift be given, whereby there shall be for him [i.e. the giver] inexhaustible food for ever and ever?' Then whichever man worships them ... then him they bless, contented .... In that house there shall be troops of cattle and men, there shall be a fleet horse and strong *chariot, there shall be a *steadfast, eloquent man, who will worship us again with hands holding meat and clothing, with *āsa-attaining worship". The festival is described in the following terms in a late Zoroastrian text: "All the *fravāšī (then) come down on this earth and they all go back to their own (former) abodes ... Hence it is necessary for men that (during) these ... days they should put fragrant perfumes on the fire and should praise the souls, and perform the *myāzd and *āšīnāgān and recite the Avesta so that those souls may be in comfort, joy and delight, and may confer blessings. And ... during those ... days they should not engage themselves in any other thing except in doing duties and good works, so that the souls may go back to their places with delight and pronounce benedictions." Further the historian Al-Bīrūnī wrote of the Zoroastrian festival as follows: "During this time this people put food in the (halls of the) dead and drink on the roofs of the houses, believing that the spirits of their dead ... come out from the places of their reward or their punishment, that they go to the dishes laid out for them, imbibe their strength and suck their taste. They fumigate their houses with juniper that the dead may enjoy its smell. The spirits of the pious men dwell among their families, children and relations, and occupy

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70 *Anabasis* VI.20.9.  
71 Fravahr (here reduced to frāhr, frāhar) is a Middle Iranian dialect form of Av. *fravāš*. Of *fravārī, Ardāy fravāš* has sometimes been treated by Western scholars as a *yasād*, a divine being representing all the departed souls of the righteous, as *Gaōs Urvan* represents all the departed souls of morally-clain animals (see, e.g., J. and Th. Baunack, *Studien auf dem Gebiete der griechischen und der arischen Sprachen*, Leipzig 1888, 12, 437; Gray, *Foundations*, 137); but the Zoroastrian liturgies show that this is a misconception. Every religious service has its introduction or *dīkā*, composed in Middle Persian, which contains its dedication in anticipation of the Avestan dedication uttered in the course of the ceremony itself; and wherever an act of worship is declared in Avestan to be *alaunām fravāšī-nām* "of the *fravāšī of the just", then according to the Middle Persian it belongs to *ardāy fravāš*. More strikingly still, where the Av. formula contains the words *vispaštā alaunām fravāšī-nām*, the MP equivalent is *vispaštā ardāy fravāš* "of all the righteous *fravāšīs". The MP dedication for services solemnized on Farvardin Rōz, the day devoted to all the *fravāšīs, is likewise to *ardāy fravāš*. In the MP translation of the yathūr, the phrase *alaunām fravāšī-nām* is similarly rendered by *ardāy fravāš*. According to *Zādāyman X.3* (ed. BTA, 61-2/kxxvii, transl. West, *SE* XLVII, 145, as XVI.3), the female divinities Spandārān and Ardvinrā were sent down to earth to guard the infant Zoroaster, together with *ardāy fravāšīs*, that is, the *fravāšīs* of the righteous; West's comment, loc. cit. n. 2, that these three names represent "three female spirits" is slightly misleading.  
72 None of the earlier attempts at analysing this word have met with general acceptance, see Bartholomae, *Ar. Wb.* 1776. Herzfeld's subsequent attempt to link it with Av. *spāhsā "army" is also unconvincing.  
73 For some parallels in other cultures see Moulton, *EZ*, 263.  
75 On these lines see ibid., 521-2.  
themselves with their affairs, although invisible to them”. Still today, in both the Parsi and Irani communities, houses are meticulously cleaned and made ready for the annual coming of the spirits, ritual offerings of food and clothing are laid out in an especially pure place, and a lamp is lit there to welcome them, which burns throughout the hours of darkness during the whole festival. The presence of the spirits is strongly felt by the living, and a sense of happiness and family piety informs the festival, with hardly any touch of that ancient dread associated with contact with the other world. Nevertheless Mithra, the great warrior and protector, was especially invoked, before the *fravasis* themselves, in the night-offices of the festival; and there is a rite practised still in Iran at the end of the feast to bid the spirits farewell, which seems to have about it an ancient element of exorcism. At the first faint light of dawn on New Year’s Day a fire is lit on every roof and Avesta is chanted. As daylight grows stronger, it is believed, the *fravasis* steadily withdraw until by the time the sun rises they have departed utterly. Nowadays they are thought to ascend, rising up through the air to their heavenly home; but presumably in remote, pagan antiquity they were held to retire again, before the sun’s rays reached them, into the kingdom of shadows beneath the earth. That the *fravasis* are in general associated with the hours of darkness, like spirits of the dead the world over, is shown by the fact that Hamaspamādaya, appears originally to have been a festival of the night. Moreover, in every twenty-four-hour day one watch is dedicated to the *fravasis*, namely *Aivisirāthra*, the time between sunset and midnight. There is something a little baneful about this period, for the powers of evil seem felt to be gathering strength during it, before the forces of good rally to smite them during Usah, the watch from midnight to dawn, which for Zoroastrians is under the protection of Sraoša. It is forbidden in their usage to solemnise any of the high rituals in *Aivisirāthra*, or even to make preparations for them. If *haoma* is to be made ready, or water drawn, or milk procured, these things must be done in the daylight hours, or under the protection of Sraoša, but not while the *fravasis* are abroad.

It was natural that darkness should have been dreaded, and that there should have been fear also of the spirits which inhabited it. In the Vedas one finds this fear more marked than among the Zoroastrians, as presumably it was also in pagan Iran; but, as has been pointed out, although there was constant anxiety lest injury come from the dead, this was due not to direct fear of the spirits of the dead, but rather to fear of death itself. “The dead has not a hostile nature, but the thing which has affected him is to be feared.” Men cared for their forefathers, and supposed them eager to aid them. It is only when they are not duly worshipped that the departed may be dangerous to their descendants; and even then it is suggested (in the Zoroastrian tradition at least) that their reaction is less anger at neglect of themselves than grief that, not having been honoured, they are then powerless to help their descendants. The same appears broadly true of the Vedic approach to the *pitaras*; and yet banning formulas occur explicitly in Indian rituals. Thus at the monthly ritual for departed souls, after the food-offerings have been made the following words are uttered: “Depart, ye Fathers... on your ancient deep paths; but return a month later to our house to eat the offering, with wealth in offspring, in heroes.”

It is in the spirit of this ancient formula, which both bids the spirits go and yet invokes their blessing, that at the end of their festival of All Souls (*Muhādā* or *Farvardīgan*) Parsis today still sometimes utter the words “Old people and new children” (*junān dosān ane navān chokrān*), thus expressing the hope that the next year it will be only the “old” souls who return, there having been no more deaths, but that new children will have been born to the house. It is natural that the departed should be thought of as concerned to continue the family, for it is through the birth of descendants that offerings and rites will be maintained on their behalf. Hence it is said of the *fravasis*: “It is by their splendour and glory that females conceive children... give birth easily, have a wealth of children” (*Y.i.3.15*); and still today among Zoroastrians the *fravasis* are especially invoked at the time of marriage. Attributing to them care for the survival of the family is linked with regarding the *fravasis* as protective spirits

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79 Lommel, *Die Yâsê*, 108, saw a possible element of exorcism in the use of sweet-smelling substances placed on the fire (as reported by Bīrūnī); but it is in fact general practice in all Zoroastrian ceremonies to create fragrance to delight the divine beings and spirits. See, e.g. Moulton, *EZ*, 285; Modi, *GC*, 312-2.
80 See Boyce, art. cit., 519. The custom is now maintained only in villages.
81 See Y. 1.6 et passim.
82 On the Zoroastrian divisions of the 24 hours see Ch. 10, below.
83 See Keith, *Rel. and Phil.*, II, 425. In the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, i.1.3.1 ff. “it is said that the fathers, living in the south, do not have evil dispelled from them (*anapahata-pāpam*), to them belongs the night, while the day belongs to the gods” (Rodhe, *Deliver us from evil*, 51).
84 See Śākyat nē-pāyati, IX.13 (ed. Tavadia, 123).
86 See Dara S. Meherji Rana, *Nāth ane Khwaldīn*, Bombay 1939, 73, describing usage at Navsari in the 20th century (a reference for which I am indebted to Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal). The final ceremony in question is the large *stūm* consecrated at midday on Roz ikhordād, Māh Farvardīn; and the wish is expressed by those attending on behalf of the family concerned.
87 See Boyce, *BSOAS* XXXI, 271 n. 4.
in general, who help their descendants to live and thrive. "Then when the waters flow out from the sea Vourukaša, then the mighty fravāšis of the just advance, many, many hundreds, many, many thousands, many, many tens of thousands, seeking each to obtain water for her own family, for her own village, for her own tribe, for her own country" (Yt.13.65). And each, gaining the life-giving water, drives it away before her in rain-clouds, saying: "May our land flourish and grow" (Yt.13.68).

Yet even when the fravāšis are thus portrayed as conversing and protective, what may be assumed to be their primary heroic role is not wholly eclipsed. Their striving to obtain water, each for her own people, is described in the following terms: "They fight our battles (each) in her own place and abode, where (each) had had a place and dwelling to inhabit, even as a mighty chariot-warrior should fight, having girt on his sword-belt, for his well-gotten treasure" (Yt.13.67). Further it is said: "Then when a powerful ruler of the land is threatened from before hostile foes, he calls on them, the powerful fravāšis of the just. They shall come to him to help, if they are not angered by him...; they are made to fly down to him like well-winged birds. They serve him as weapon and arms... so that, on account of this, not a well-drawn dagger, not a well-swung mace, not a well-strung arrow, not a well-darted spear or hurled stone shall reach its mark" (Yt.13.69-72). The fravāšis are "to be invoked in victories, invoked in battles" (Yt.13.23); and in the Zoroastrian tradition of Angra Mainyu's assault upon the world the fravāšis of the just are said to have been drawn up to withstand his attack upon the sky as warriors with spear in hand, like guards over a fortress.

The fravāšis thus help in war, and they give aid also in peace. They are "givers of... a boon to the eager, of health to the sick, givers of good fortune to him who invokes them, worshipping, satisfying, bringing offerings" (Yt.13.24). In fact, like the Indian pitaras, the fravāšis receive reverence and supplication in very much the same way as the gods themselves, and are held to have the same capacity to answer prayers and bestow boons. It seems probable that protective powers, perhaps early attributed to the heroic departed, were magnified with the development of the doctrine that blessed souls might hope to dwell with the gods themselves in heaven, so that they acquired divine attributes by this association.91

This leads us to the vexed question of the history of the belief that the fravāšis not only lives after the death of a person on earth, but has had a pre-existence as a spirit before that person was born—that it is in fact as immortal as the gods. As a group the fravāšis are represented as present at the creation of the world; and in the Zoroastrian version of their hymn Ahura Mazda declares that it was by their splendour and glory that he set in order the creations of sky and water, earth and plants, cattle and men (Yt.13.1-11). "If the mighty fravāšis of the just had not given me help, there would not now have been cattle and men..." (Yt.13.12); and it is through them that the world is kept in growth and motion (Yt.13.14,16). The verses which describe these functions of the fravāšis are in part heavily Zoroastrianised; yet there is good reason to think that the doctrine of the six creations is older than the prophet's teachings,92 and it is very probable that the fravāšis were associated with it before his time. Some scholars have even held that "the idea of pre-existence... is a fundamental one in connexion with the Fravashis",93 but this seems a more doubtful proposition. As we have seen, the concept of the fravāšis suggests the cult both of hero and ancestor, and it was presumably in a large measure the product of popular and family piety; whereas speculation about pre-existence and the creation of the world is much more likely to have evolved in priestly schools (for although his future fate may be of deep concern to the ordinary man, what has gone before this present life is little likely to engage his thoughts). The doctrine that the departed ancestors, at least of the great, had their dwelling with the gods appears to have developed in Indo-Iranian times, since it is common to the two peoples; but that of the six creations has no close parallel in Vedic India, and was probably the result of cosmogonic speculation by Iranian priests. It seems likely that there evolved along with this speculation the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, who being now potentially godlike were held to share the immortality of the gods, stretching backward as well as forward in time; and since the fravāšis were the mightiest members of the kingdom of the dead, this doctrine, it seems, came to be linked explicitly with them rather than with the arvan. Presumably then, since they were also the especial protectors of men, a part was attributed to them in shaping the world in which men were to dwell. According to this interpretation, belief in the

91 It is evidently because of this link between the fravāšis and the life-giving water that a number of verses from the hymn to Ardvī Sūrā (Yt. 5) have been attracted to their cult, and form part of the beginning of Yt. 13.

92 Lommel, in attributing the original concept of the fravāšis to Zoroaster, explained such primitive-seeing passages as later accretions (Die Yelit's, 108).

93 G.Bd. VI 6.3 (transl. BTA, 70).

94 See Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 425; Oldenberg, Rel., 548. In India, however, the rituals are carefully differentiated when the fathers and when the gods are the object of sacrifice, see Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 114 f.

95 See in more detail in the following chapter.

96 A. Y. W. Jackson apud Moulton, E.Z., 272.
pre-existence of the fravāšīs must be held to have evolved gradually during the pagan Iranian period, rather than being fundamental to their concept. The developed doctrine came to be that each fravāšī existed from the beginning of time in a spiritual (mēmōg) state; that in due course it was born, clad in a physical body, into this world; and that after death it lived once more in a spiritual state, to be re-united again ultimately with its resurrected physical body. In both the second and third states the fravāšī tended to be identified with the urvān, as these concepts merged. The question then was pondered as to which, in the present state of the world, was the most powerful, the unborn fravāšī, or that of a living person, or that of a dead one? This again suggests the theorising of priestly schools rather than a point of any popular concern. The Zoroastrian answer was that the fravāšīs of the great men of the faith, whether already dead or not yet born, were the most powerful, but that otherwise the fravāšīs of the living were the strongest (Y.13,17)—a doctrine which seems to reflect the profound universal instinct that it is better to be alive in the flesh in the present familiar world than to exist in any other state. In the Farvardin Yāsī one finds the idea of possessing a fravāšī apparently greatly extended, probably through the identification of fravāšī with urvān. As we have seen, in the Yasna Hafrāspātī the souls, urvān, of useful animals are reverenced; but in Y.13 (v.154) it is the fravāšīs of these creatures which are invoked; and in this hymn even the gods themselves are held to have fravāšīs, including (in the Zoroastrian redaction) Ahura Mazdā and the Amāsha Spāntas (vv.80-6). Of this development Lommel has justly observed: "That a fravāšī . . . should be attributed to purely spiritual divine persons remains wholly incomprehensible to us. That would then have to signify, if anything, some sort of spiritual sublimation of the spiritual gods. And that is inconceivable. The suspicion is awakened that these, the highest beings, have been brought into the formula of invocation of the fravāšīs mechanically, simply in order to set them at the head of the beings to be duly adored". As he further points out, a mounting tendency to seek to embrace everything within this formula led finally to the tautology that the fravāšīs of fravāšīs came to be invoked (v.156). This was presumably a late development of priestly pedantry.  

The cult and literature of the fravāšīs thus shows many layers of growth. Not only does there seem to be the slow accretion of priestly dogma around a core of popular belief and custom, but also an amalgamation of such beliefs, with the fusing of a general cult of the departed spirit, the urvān, with worship of the heroic dead. The result of such fusions and developments was a tangle of curious anomalies, which have been vividly summarised by Söderblom: "Two things, apparently contradictory, characterise the existence of the fravāšīs; on the one hand their wretched state, on the other their superhuman power. The dead depend upon the liberality of the living; among themselves they are poor and unhappy. They hasten eagerly to eat and drink what is offered them, and they have need of clothing to protect themselves against cold and shame. Why are these offerings made them? Out of love for a loved being, now vanished ... But love, attachment, is not the only motive, and not even the constant motive behind funerary practices. The increase of the family, the irrigation of fields, the nourishing of plants, the prosperity of herds and man, all that is of worth in life depends upon them. Their power is unlimited, and becomes baneful for those who do not fulfil their duties towards them ... Yet the power of the dead, although it inspires so much respect and fear, is not enviable; no one would wish to be dead to possess it. It offers no consolation for the loss of this life and does not make death less sad or less dreadful." Although this complexity of belief arose partly, it seems, from the blending of the cults of fravāšī and urvān, a broad distinction between the two concepts persists in Zoroastrian observance, and seems to be felt without the aid of theological argument. This is that one prays for the urvān, but to the fravāšī, since the former needs man's help, whereas the latter, if duly venerated, becomes his protector. The fravāšīs are accordingly invoked in every Zoroastrian act of worship, no matter to which individual divine being this is specifically dedicated; and this probably perpetuates very ancient usage.

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94 There are in fact some scholars who hold that it developed even later, within Zoroastrianism itself, see Söderblom, RHR XXXIX, 495.
95 Die Yāsī's, 170. See also Corbin, Eranos Jahrbuch XX, 1951, 170-1; XXII, 1953, 102.
96 Die Yāsī's, 110 n. 1.
97 There is a curious statement in the Mēmōg i Khrad (a text probably compiled in the 6th century A.C.), XLIX.22 that the nameless and unnumbered stars represent the fravāšīs of earthly beings (gīthāyā); but this appears to be isolated and unreconciled with general doctrine.

98 Art. cit., 413-5.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE WORLD

There are many indications in the Avesta of the character of ancient Iranian beliefs about the nature of the world and its origins. Some of the most important occur in what appear to be oldest parts of the "great" yazits, and for this reason alone the ideas concerned can be attributed with fair certainty to the pagan period. They also agree in a number of respects with Vedic notions. In other points, however, they diverge from Indian concepts; and in general the Iranian theories show considerable systematisation, which suggests intensive thought and study in priestly schools. The results of this intellectual activity fortunately survive in unusual completeness and clarity in the Pahlavi work called Bundahish or "Creation." This is a compilation concerned mainly with cosmogony and cosmology, which derives directly from lost parts of the Avesta itself together with their later commentary or zand. Its most ancient layers of material can usually be identified as such, since direct quotations from the Avesta are introduced by a standard formula, pad din gowéd "in the Religion he (i.e. Zoroaster) says", and this scriptural matter accords admirably with incidental allusions in the surviving Avestan texts themselves.

1 Indian ideas on cosmography are set out in detail by W. Kiefer, *Die Kosmographie der Indo-nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Bonn und Leipzig, 1920.
2 The text of this work was edited by T. A. Anklesaria, *The Bundahish*, Bombay 1908; and transcribed and translated by B. T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ahādis, Iranian or Greater Bundahish*, Bombay 1926. References here are given, by chapter, paragraph and page number, to this translation (which is accompanied by the full numbers of TDA's edition). A facsimile of the text, from a better manuscript, was published in Tehran in 1971, as The Bundahish, being a facsimile edition of the manuscript TD 1, Iranian Culture Foundation No. 88. The "Indian Bundahish" is a shorter version of the same work, derived from a different manuscript tradition. Its text was published with a German translation by F. Justi, *Der Bundeshch*, Leipzig 1868; and an English translation, with valuable notes, by E. W. West appeared in *JBE* V, 1901. Many of the passages cited below were transcribed and translated by Nyberg, *"Questions de cosmogenie et de cosmologie mazdéennes*", *Jh* 1910, 193-310; 1931, 1-134; and by Zocher, *Zoroa*. A condensed account of the story of creation is given in *Publ. R. I. D.* LXVI (ed. Dhabhar, 127-35, transl. H. K. Mirza, London thesis, 1949).
3 On this phrase see Henning, *JRA* 1947, 231 n. 8. He understood the "is" implied in gowêd to be Ohrmazd himself; but the phrase so often introduces words or acts attributed to the Creator in the third person that it seems more probable that the speaker is regarded as Zoroaster, the prophet to whom God revealed all things, and who is held therefore to be the author of the whole Avesta.

The ancient theories about the nature of the world which are enshrined in the Bundahish appear closely linked with Zoroaster's own doctrines, and indeed seem in a measure to have provided the basis for these. Yet since the prophet was himself so markedly and dominantly a moral thinker, inspired by his own immediate vision of the divine, there is a general probability that in matters concerning the physical world he accepted existing hypotheses rather than evolving theories of his own—that it was other thinkers before him who strove to understand the nature of creation, his own preoccupation being rather with its purpose. This probability is strengthened by the fact that the Zoroastrian version of the cosmogony shows certain anomalies, as if ancient amoral doctrines had been adapted by Zoroaster to convey his own wholly ethical interpretation of world history. The physical ideas underlying his doctrines may be safely presumed therefore to have existed already before his day, to be learnt by him in the zoolar schools in which he studied.

The ancient Iranian world-picture appears a coherent and orderly one, although there are abundant indications that formerly different theories about creation existed, from which an accepted doctrine was gradually evolved. According to the Bundahish the cosmos was brought into being through a series of six creations—although to whose agency this was attributed in pagan times, or in what manner it was brought about, remains unknown. In the Avesta the verb used for the act of establishing the sky, waters and earth is *vidāraya*, which means "arrange, regulate" rather than "make"; and in the Vedas too a metaphor for building (rather than evolving) is often used of creation. In the Avesta the verbs *thwars- and taš- are employed for animate things, and these have the sense of "shape by cutting, carve, fashion", so that in their case too it seems to be assumed that the raw material already existed. The presence in the Iranian pantheon of the divinity Gōši Tašan "Shaper of the Bull" suggests that in pagan times acts of creation were attributed to a number of gods, rather than there being one deity who was regarded as the creator. We have seen that the Iranian *Vouruna was regarded as a creator god; and in India Varuṇa is represented as having established heaven and earth, although the creation of different parts of the world is ascribed to diverse gods, Indra among them. Indeed in the Vedic hymns "certain great cosmic functions are predicated of nearly every leading deity individually. The action of supporting or establishing heaven is so generally attributed to

4 See, e.g., Yt. 13.4.9.
them that in the Atharvaveda (19.32) it is even ascribed to a magical bunch of ... grass".²

The first of the Iranian creations, according to established doctrine, was that of the "sky".² This was conceived as an empty shell, perfectly round, and made of stone, which enclosed everything, passing beneath the earth as far as framing the space above it. The idea that the sky was made of stone appears to be Indo-European;³ and in Iranian languages the various words for "sky" (Av. āsman) originally meant simply "stone" or "stones".⁴ In Y.30.2 Zoroaster himself refers to the sky as being of "hardest stones" (khrvādāstīṃ āsānā); and the tradition shows that this celestial substance was identified as rock-crystal⁵ (a hypothesis comparable with the Greek theory of the crystal spheres). This appears a reasonable scholastic essay in early physics, for the clear sky over Central Asia and Iran often seems to have the hardness and definition of crystal, as well as sharing its capacity to take on different and exquisite colours. Matters were complicated, however, by the fact that in the Iranian priestly schools rock-crystal came to be classified also as a "metal"—no doubt because of its brightness and because it, like precious metals, is won by quarrying veins within rock. The sky can therefore be said to be made of either stone or metal. In what appears to be a fundamentally old part of the Farvardin Yašt (Y.13.2) it is described as being "in the form of bright metal" (āyāḥ-ā khrvāpa khrvāēnāh); and both definitions are offered in the Pahlavi books. Thus in the Dādestān i dinâg, Pursûn XC, the sky is said to have "visible brightness, being stone, of all stones the hardest and most beautiful";⁶ whereas in the Bundahishn it is described as "light, visible, very distant, of the substance of bright metal";⁷ and in a later passage of the same work it is declared that "the firmness of metal is from the sky, the true substance (bun gôhr) of the sky is metallic".⁸ This hard "sky" enclosing the world is compared in the Pahlavi texts to a storehouse containing all necessary things, and also frequently to a fortress that guards what is within it.⁹ Its protective nature is further indicated by a simile in Y.13.2, where it is said to be "upon and around this earth just like a bird (upon) an egg".¹⁰

The second creation was that of water,¹¹ which was thought of as filling the lower part of the globular "sky"; and the third that of earth. "And the water remained everywhere beneath this earth".¹² The creation of earth is described as being in three stages,¹³ and perhaps Hertel was right when, comparing Indian and Iranian traditions, he suggested that the myth of Yima enlarging the earth derives from an older one of the gradual creation of land out of muddy water.¹⁴ The surface of the earth was conceived as having been originally a round plane, filling like a flat dish the exact centre of the "sky".¹⁵ From its surface there grew up in time mountains, which were thought of as having "roots" like plants, that went deep down under the ground.¹⁶ The first and greatest of these mountains was Harā barzaiti, Pahlavi Harburz, Persian Alborz, the "lofty Watchpost",¹⁷ a great range encircling the rim of the still flat earth. It is said in Y.19.1: "As the first mountain there stood upon this earth high Harā, which encircles entirely the eastern lands and the western lands". The Bundahishn describes its growth in the following terms: The first mountain which grew up was fortunate Harburz; from that, afterwards, all mountains grew up ... Harburz kept growing till the fulness of 800 years: 200 years to the star-region, 200 years to the moon-region, 200 years to the sun-region, 200 years to the height of heaven".¹⁸ (As this quotation shows, in

² Gbd. I.54 et pass. The creations are given in their order in several Avestan passages, of which the oldest are probably those in Yt. 13, see vv. 2-10 et seq. In Gbd. I.5.3 (BTA, 21) it is said that "first the entire creation was a drop of water"; but this seems to reflect a more sophisticated development of later (probably Parthian or Sasanian) times.
³ See most recently H. Beinaz, "Der steinerne Himmel", Ann. Acad. Reg. Scient. Upsalienses IV, 1960, 5-28, with references to particular studies in the Iranian field. Kuiper, IJIII VIII, 1964, 106 ff., argues from the Vedic material that in India there was no concept of a stone sky, but that during the night the ether world was thought of as hanging over the earth in an inverted position (p. 116). Indo-Iranian epicycle speculations seem, however, based largely on analogy; and to the writer it appears improbable (and not adequately substantiated by the texts) that the Vedic Indians should have thought that the stone basin which held the sea could be nightly turned upside down over their heads without the water spilling down from it and drowning the earth, in accord with well-known physical laws. For Vedic ideas of a round "world" enclosed by an upper and a lower bowl see Kirfel, Kosmographie, 4*-10*.
⁴ Gbd. I.5.6 (BTA, 23).
⁵ See most recently H. Beinaz, "Der steinerne Himmel", Ann. Acad. Reg. Scient. Upsalienses IV, 1960, 5-28, with references to particular studies in the Iranian field. Kuiper, IJIII VIII, 1964, 106 ff., argues from the Vedic material that in India there was no concept of a stone sky, but that during the night the ether world was thought of as hanging over the earth in an inverted position (p. 116). Indo-Iranian epicycle speculations seem, however, based largely on analogy; and to the writer it appears improbable (and not adequately substantiated by the texts) that the Vedic Indians should have thought that the stone basin which held the sea could be nightly turned upside down over their heads without the water spilling down from it and drowning the earth, in accord with well-known physical laws. For Vedic ideas of a round "world" enclosed by an upper and a lower bowl see Kirfel, Kosmographie, 4*-10*.
⁶ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
⁷ See the masterly exposition by Bailey, op. cit., Ch. IV.
⁸ Gbd. I.5.6 (BTA, 23).
⁹ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
¹⁰ See the masterly exposition by Bailey, op. cit., Ch. IV.
¹¹ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
¹² Gbd. I.5.6 (BTA, 23).
¹³ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
¹⁴ See the masterly exposition by Bailey, op. cit., Ch. IV.
¹⁵ Gbd. I.5.6 (BTA, 23).
¹⁶ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
¹⁷ See the masterly exposition by Bailey, op. cit., Ch. IV.
¹⁸ Gbd. I.5.6 (BTA, 23).
¹⁹ For references to discussions of this word and its cognates see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 124 n. 1.
and the ancient cosmography the stars were regarded as nearer to the earth than moon and sun.) The concept of all-encompassing Harā has its parallel in the Indian one of lokaḥloka, a ring of mountains surrounding all the continents of the earth. The Iranians and Indians both thought that the world was divided into seven regions, called in Avestan karśvar (Pahl. kəšvar), in Sanskrit divaipa. These regions the Iranians had held when rain first fell upon the earth, breaking it into pieces. The central region, which they called Khvaniratha, was, they believed, as large as all the other six put together; and this was the one inhabited by man. Zoroaster alludes to this belief in Y. 32.3, where he says that by their deeds the daērāwus had made themselves known "in the seventh part of the earth". The Indians called this central region Jambūdvīpa, and thought of the other six as ring-shaped continents which formed hollow concentric circles around it, separated one from the other by oceans. The Iranians held that each region was a solid circle, the six lesser ones being scattered around the "splendid clime of Khvaniratha", but likewise cut off from it, although in various ways, by water, forest and rugged mountain. To the east lay Arazahi, to the west Savahi; to the north-east Pahlav-barzīti; to the north-west Pahlav-jarazīti; to the south-east Frada∂hafūti, to the south-west Vidada∂hafūti.

In the very centre of the region inhabited by man both peoples held that there was a great mountain. The Indians called it Mount Mēru, or Sumēru. In Iran it had various names. It was there thought to have grown up from the "roots" of encircling Harā (which ran all under the earth), and to be therefore a part of that great chain. It was accordingly called the "Peak (Taērə) of Harā"; and the Khotanese Sakas, when they became Buddhists, used this old name, "Peak of Harā" (taēra harayās), to render Mt. Sumēru. In Pahlavi it was often called simply Tērəg, or

The sun is imagined to move in summer more slowly by day than by night, and in the winter more slowly by night than by day, the motions being only equal at the equinoxes, and on this is explained the difference in the length of day and night". The Indo-Iranians shared evidently an ancient religious calendar divided into 360 days; and in the Pahlavi texts it is said that there were 180 windows on the eastern side of the Peak, 180 on the west; and that the sun came through an eastern window each day at dawn, and passed back through a western one at night. "When the sun comes out, it warms the keśvars of Arzah, Fradaraf and Vidadaf, and half of Khvaniras. When it goes into the other side of the Peak, it warms the keśvars of Savah, Voururbarīš and Vourujarīš, and half of Khvaniras. When it is day here, it is night there".

Harā gives not only liquid but also water to the world (a belief that may well be older than the learned doctrine of the six creations). "Just as light comes in from Harburz and goes out from Harburz, water too comes in from Harburz and goes out from Harburz". In Vendidad xi there is an incantation that links light and the waters, high Harā and the sea Vourukasha. The name of this sea means "having many inlets"; and in Pahlavi it either appears as Varkaš, or more commonly is translated as Frākhvkarad. It was held to occupy "one third of the earth, to the

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30 Gbd. VIII.1 (BTA, 91).
31 On a possible etymology of this name see Gershevitch, AHM, 176.
32 Gbd. VIII.1 (BTA, 91).
33 The fact that the prophet knew this division of the world means that if Babylonian influence had been exerted in this matter (as has been maintained by a number of scholars, see Kirmel, Kosmographie, 58 ff.), this would have had to have taken place very early, perhaps through contacts with Mesopotamia in the 2nd millennium B.C.
34 See Barnett, loc. cit. In fanciful later developments these oceans were said to be of such liquids as sugar-cane juice, clarified butter, milk and whey.
35 Yl 10.15.
36 Gbd. VIII.4 (BTA, 91); Memsīg i Khurad IX.5.
37 See, e.g., Gbd. V b.7-10 (BTA, 65-7).
38 See Kirmel, op. cit., 157. This concept too is thought by some scholars to originate in Babylon, see ibid., 14*15* 31*.
41 In India this was a lunar calendar, see, e.g., Barnett, loc. cit.; in ancient Iranian theory both sun and moon years were regarded as being 360 days in length. See most recently Boyce, BSOAS XXXII, 1970, 515 ff.
42 Gbd. V b.3 (BTA, 63); Pahl. Rev. Dd., LXV, see Bailey, Zor. Problems, 138; Boyce, art. cit., 515-6.
43 Gbd. V b.17 (BTA, 67).
44 Cf. Yl 21.5.
45 It is evidently because of the connection between the sun and Harā that Mithra is said to have his abode upon the mountain, built for him there by the Immortals (Yl. 10, 36f).
46 Gbd. XI.6 (BTA, 105).
47 See Bartholomae, Air. Wb. 1429-30.
south, on the skirts of Harburz", 44 and to be "the gathering place of water" (Vd.21.15). Upon its shores the rain-god Tištrya fights Apaša, and the fravasis congregate to win water for their kinsfolk. It is fed unfailingly by the mythical river *Harahvaiti, which is as large as all the other streams together which flow upon the earth.45 This huge river pours down from the Peak of Harā into Vourukaśa. "All the edges in the sea Vourukāsa are troubled, all the centre is disturbed, when Arādvī Sūrā Anāhitā flows forth upon them, when she pours forth upon them" (Yt. 5.4). From the sea there flow out two great rivers, which form the eastern and western boundary (hindu-) of Khvaniratha.46 The word hindu- (Skt. sindhu-), used thus to mean a river-frontier of the inhabited world, was also applied generally, it seems, to any big river which, like the Indus, formed a natural frontier between peoples or lands.47 The specific names of the two mythical boundary rivers in Iranian tradition were the Vahnjī Dāityā, the "good Dāityā", which flowed to the east, and the Raghā, which flowed to the west.48 In Pahlavi they are known as the Veh Dāity or Veh Rād, "the river Veh" (the epithet "good" having been mistaken for the proper name), and the Arang.49 According to the Bundahišn, these two rivers having passed round the earth are cleansed and return to Vourukaša (Frākkvarkard), whence their waters are carried up once more to the Peak of Harā to descend again on the mythical sea, in perpetual motion.50

In the centre of Vourukaša there stands a mountain called Us.handa.44 "Beyond the frontier" (presumably in this case the "frontier" formed by the waters of the sea itself) 51. This mountain is said to be "of the bright metal which is the substance of the sky", that is, crystal;52 and around its summit gather the vapours which as rain-clouds are distributed over the earth by Eqfarm Naπāt and bold Vāta, by Khvanaranah in the waters, and by the fravasis of the just (Yt.8.34). Thus all the water that flows or falls in the world comes from the sea Vourukaša, which in turn has its source in the river *Harahvaiti Arādvī Sūrā, descending from high Harā.

44 GBl. X.1 (BTA. 101).
45 Yt. 5.3 = Yt. 13.6. On the later epithet for Anāhitā of *Dani.hara see above, p. 74 with n. 145.
46 See Yt. 10.104.
47 On both meaning and use of the word see Thieme, "Sanskrit sindhu-/Sindhu and Old Iranian hindu-/Hindu", Henning Memorial Volume, 447-50.
48 GBl. XI.1 (BTA. 165).
49 On these two rivers and their identification in later times with actual rivers see Markwart, Wahrtd und Arang, Untersuchungen zur mythischen und geschichtlichen Landschwan von Osrana, Leiden 1918.
50 GBl. XI.2 (BTA. 113-3), XXVIII.8 (BTA. 247).
51 See Thieme, art. cit., 449. (Otherwise Bailey, Mythological Studies I, ed. Hinnells, 6 n., who takes us.handa to mean "high place").
52 GBl. IX.9 (BTA. 95): khvan-āxān, kē gōhr i asmān.
(Vd.5.19). In Yl 12.17 it is called the Saena Tree, because it is the perch of that great mythical bird; and also the Tree of All Remedies, because it bears the seeds of all healing herbs. In the Pahlavi books it is given various names: The Tree of All Seeds, the Tree of All Healing, or the Tree Opposing Harm. In the Zoroastrian account of creation it is said that when the Evil Spirit poisoned the original plant, making it wither, the Immortal who cares for plants, Anfarzat, pounced it small, and its essence was scattered over the earth by rain, and from it grew all plants; and it was from the seeds of these, its first descendants, that the Tree of All Seeds grew up in Vourukaş. This seems to be an artificial marrying of old popular myth with less picturesque priestly doctrines. Thereafter every year Tisrya takes up the seeds from the Tree with the waters, so that he may "rain (them) upon the world with the rain", and renew the life of plants everywhere.

Close by the Tree of All Seeds in the sea Vourukaş stood, it is said, the other great tree of Iranian mythology, the "mighty Gaokara" (Yl. 1.30), Pahl.Gokarn or Gokart. This is mentioned in the Vendidad (20.4) as being surrounded by healing plants; and the Pahlavi books explain that this tree is the "White Hoom", the "chief of plants", which confers long life upon whoever eats from it, holding back "short-breathed age", and brings about the immortality of the resurrected bodies of the dead. There seems some confusion in the mythology between this tree of life and the Tree of All Seeds, for they grow close together, both are guarded by the kar-fish, and both are associated with healing plants. There appear to be old Indo-Iranian concepts behind these tree-myths, for the Indians held that there was a huge tree, the Jambū (giving its name to Jambudvīpa), which grew at the south side of Mt. Mēru (Vourukaş lies at the south side of Harā), and was associated with soma and immortality, and also with healing herbs.

The fifth creation was that of animals, which has its origin in the Uniquely-created Bull, the Gav aevō-dāda, in Pahl. the Gav i tw-dād, who was "white, bright like the moon, and three measured poles in height". He, the first animal to live on earth, was slain. In the Zoroastrian version of the myth (which is the only one known from Iran), the Evil Spirit, Ahirman, killed him (just as he had shrivelled up the "plant"). Part of his seed was taken up to the moon, which has the epithet gao.chitra "having the seed of the Bull"; and from this seed, purified there, were born all species of beneficent animals. Part of it fell to the ground, and from it sprang many kinds of useful plants. The anomalies of this myth in its Zoroastrian version have often been pointed out. Presumably in its original pagan form the Bull died as a sacrifice and its death was essentially a creative and useful act from which good resulted, namely the generation of all other good creatures and plants; possibly, as has been suggested, it was the prototype of the yearly sacrifice made at the autumn feast of Mithra, offered to renew life the following spring in pastures and herds.

In the Zoroastrian version of the six creations, however, although the Bull's death brings good, it is itself bad, brought about by the Evil Spirit. Even in what may be assumed to be the more coherent pagan version the springing of plants from the dying animal's seed duplicates the generation of plants in the myth of the fourth creation. This is doubtless an old anomaly, brought about by the schematisation of a diversity of myths.

According to the Bundahišn the Uniquely-created Bull lived its life on the bank of the river Veh Dātī, and on the opposite bank stood Gayā maratān, Pahlavi Gayomard, the mythical First Man. He is also referred to occasionally in the Avesta simply as Gayā "Life"; but his full name means "Mortal Life", and it seems to have been given him in antithesis to the "immortal life" (Vedic āmartya-gāya-) of the gods. Gayā maratān is described as being "bright as the sun, and his height was four measured poles, and his breadth just as much as his height". This curious figure has been strikingly compared with the Vedic Mārtanda, "Mortal Seed", who was between the gods and men, for he was himself semi-
divine, but men are his descendants. Mārtanda, like Gayō.marstan, is said to have been as wide as he was tall, the "seed" from which all human life was to come; and there can be little doubt that these two figures derive from a common Indo-Iranian myth, representing one of the varied attempts to answer the question of the origin of man. The fact that Mārtanda was regarded as the last of the Ādityas brings this myth into association with the old Asuric religion.

In the Zoroastrian version of the myth Gayō.marstan was slain in his turn by the Evil Spirit, and his seed, after being purified by the sun, was partly guarded by Nairyō.sahna (Nēryō.sang), partly entrusted to the earth, from which after 40 years there sprang the rhubarb plant that grew slowly into Maśya and Maśyānag, the first mortal man and woman. From them came all the human race that inhabits Khvani, and particularly, according to Yt. 13.87 "the family of the Aryan peoples, the race of the Aryan peoples". The bodies of Gayō.mard and the Bull are both said to have been created out of earth; but their seed was from fire, not water, which otherwise is the ultimate source of all life. Man is the last of the six visible, distinct creations. There was held, however, to be a seventh creation, namely fire itself, which, though visible and perceptible in its own right, was also considered to pervade the other six, being "distributed in all". Not only is the seed of living creatures (animals and men) derived from fire; fire runs through the veins of the earth, keeping the roots of plants and springs of water warm and alive during winter; and it is seen in the sky in lightning and the sun itself;

"'mortal' and ānta 'egg' (for 'seed'), and compares Iranian *maria-tasukham 'mortal seed' (attested in Sogdian marān, the old Persian mardum, Persian mardam 'man-kind'). Māta-could, however, he points out, also be derived from māta 'dead'; and this error was made in the Brāhmaṇas, where a tale is told of how Mārtanda was still-born of the goddess Āditi, her last offspring, and was brought to life by her brother Ādityas 'for progeny but also for death' (see Hoffmann, art. cit.). In what is probably a subsequent development Mārtanda was identified as the father of the two first men, Yama and Manu, see Hoffmann, art. cit., 94.

The roundness of Gayō.marstan has led more than one scholar to see him as a macrocosm corresponding to the round macrocosm, and hence as a figure of theological speculation rather than mythical imaging; but as Hoffmann points out (art. cit., 98) the microcosm-macrocosmic speculations of the later tradition are nowhere in fact brought into connection with Gayō.marstan. He also rejects any association with the motive of the "world-egg" see ibid., 92 n. 22. On a connection of the round Mārtanda, like Gayō.marstan, with the sun, see Hoffman, ibid., 100.

81 See Hoffmann, art. cit., 99-100.
82 GBD. XIV, 5-6 (BTA, 127-9). There is a curious preceding passage (XIV,3) where it is said that the minerals came from Gayomard's body: lead, tin, silver, copper, glass, steel, gold. Elsewhere (GBD. I, 1.10, BTA, 25) several of these are said to have been part of the third creation, having been formed within the earth.
83 GBD. I, 1.3 (BTA, 27); cf. I, 1.3 (BTA, 21).
84 Zddprasam, 1.32 (ed. BTA 7, lxvii); 1.21 in the translation of West, SBE V, 159.
85 See also Baillie, Zor. Problems, 122. Cf. GBD. II, 3 (BTA, 39).

which is of the nature of fire and shares its heat and brightness. This brightness fire derives from the "Endless Light, the abode of Ohrmazd", which lies above the rim of the sky.

According to the Bundahiṣṭ, fire was the last of the seven creations; but it is by no means always numbered among them, and does not appear in the ancient Farvardīn Yāst, where the rest are repeatedly invoked. It is probable, therefore, that regarding it as one of the creations was a matter of interpretation. The fully-evolved doctrine may well have been that this element first passed into the being of the six creations proper when these became animated, forming as it were their life-force; for the theory was that in the beginning all was static: the sun stood still at noon above an earth which lay flat and bare upon the motionless waters, with the plant, the bull and Gayō.marstan existing quietly at the centre of an empty world. It seems almost certain that the pagan doctrine was that these then came threefold sacrifice, made presumably (like the first sacrifice in Vedic mythology) by the gods themselves. Even in the surviving Zoroastrian version of the creations, in which the pagan perspective has evidently been largely altered, the dried-up plant is pounded and its essence given to the waters to produce all other plants, just as the dried haoma is pounded in the living ritual and its essence offered in libation to water, for the benefit of plants in general. The mythical bull is slain and all animal life springs from its body; and the mythical First Man dies in order to beget mankind. These appear to be cultic myths of prototype sacrifices made to generate all living things. Of them human sacrifice was probably already largely abandoned by the late pagan period. The animal sacrifice is still occasionally made, however, in India and Iran, by Brahman and Zoroastrian, even in the present day, and the offering of soma/haoma is regularly maintained.

86 GBD. I, 6 (BTA, 23).
87 GBD. III, 7 (BTA, 39).
88 Cf. the Indian myth of Prajapati (the product likewise, it is evident, of priestly speculation), who was the first sacrifice, offered by the gods themselves, and the origin of sacrifice; see in detail S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas, Paris 1898, 13-35.
89 The human sacrifice made by Ameštrā was propitiatory and apparently singular, unrelated to any regular cult; and the sacrifice of 18 foreigners at the Nine Ways appears somewhat similar, a propitiatory offering in time of war, like the sacrifice of a Greek sailor (see Herodotus VII, 114, 180). The only other human sacrifices attested from pagan Iran are those made at Scythian royal funerals, evidently to provide the dead man with a retinue in the hereafter. Widengren's suggestion (Die Religionen Iran's, 116) that a passage in the Vondédad may refer to human sacrifice (and cannibalism) is based on a misundertanding of the text, see Boyce, JIRAS 1966, 104 n. 1.
90 On the bull-sacrifice and its significance see H. Lommel, Rel., 182-3; Pađāʾōma III, 1949, 207 ff.; Gershevitch, AHW, 64 ff.; U. Bianchi, Sir J. J. Zarēkōšti Madrassa Centenary Vol., Bombay 1967, 20-22; and further below, Ch. 8. On animal-sacrifice among the Zoroastrians in modern times see Vol. IV.
From these primeval sacrifices there came, it was held, movement and growth and productivity, which continued thenceforth not only through the proper motion of things, but also through the ceaseless care and energy of the divine beings. We have already seen how individual gods help the annual processes of nature, and how much also is attributed to the intervention of the fravasis, "who fashion the beautiful paths of the... waters, which formerly stood, created, not having flowed forward, in the same place for a long time... who fashion the beautiful shoots of the... plants, which formerly stood, created, not sprouting, in the same place for a long time... who fashion the paths of the stars, moon, sun, the endless lights, which formerly stood in the same place for a long time... then they now hasten onwards" (Yt.13.53-7). At the beginning of the Farvardin Yasht the six creations are constantly referred to, because of the care which the fravasis bestow upon them. Though fire is not directly spoken of, the sun and other luminaries are mentioned; and in the ancient Yasna Haptanghāši the worshippers venerate Ahura Mazda "who created cattle and order (aša) - created waters and good plants, created light and earth and all things good" (Y.37.1). Here, however, if aša is taken to represent fire (as in Zaraoaster's own teachings) then all the creations are named except the sky, for instead of the expected pair "sky and earth" one has "light and earth". Yet probably this is no more than poetic variation, with the crystal sky here represented by the light of the luminaries which move across it and distinguish it so splendidly from the dark soil.

Interwoven in the basically simple, intellectually severe doctrine of the creations there are, as we have seen, a number of what appear to be older myths, somewhat uneasily reconciled. Parallels may readily be traced for these archaic elements in various other lands, but no certain direct links have been established between them and the myths of other peoples. The Indian Puruṣa, the primal giant of Vedic mythology, who was sacrificed by the gods, has been compared with Gayāmarstan, since from this sacrifice the world was created with all that is in it; but the parallels are not close, and it is not possible safely to say more than that the germ of a common concept may lie remotely behind an idea which was developed differently by the Iranian and Indian priests. There may perhaps be some distant connection between this concept and, for example, the Scandinavian belief in the primal giant Ymir. The idea of the fertilising bull-

sacrifice seems widespread, but it has not proved possible to trace with certainty any parallel myth in the Vedas. As for the Tree of All Seeds, attempts have been made to associate this with the World-Tree of the Scandinavians—Ygdrasill's Ash or the Irmusul of the Old Saxons, quod Latinè dictur universalis columna, quasi sustinens omnia. This concept, however, probably itself developed from that of local sacred trees, often associated in their sanctuaries with a spring of water and held to have healing properties in their bark or fruits. The Tree of All Seeds growing in Vourukaša, and the Indian Jambū Tree, both seem mythical developments of such tree-cults. Evidence survives of tree worship in ancient Iran, for instance offerings by the Achaemenid Xerxes of golden ornaments to a beautiful plane tree, and the existence at the Achaemenid court of an artificial plane tree all of gold and jewel-adorned, which was likewise an object of cult. Still today there are Zoroastrian shrines in Persia where huge old trees are venerated, sometimes by the side of sacred springs, and the ancient and persistent cult of trees in India is amply documented.

As the mythical Tree of All Seeds may have had its actual prototype in some great sacred tree in a local sanctuary, so too the concepts of Vourukaša and high Harā were probably based on some particular sea or lofty mountain-range. Indeed the fact that Vourukaša is said to lie to the south of Harā fits with the theory that its original may have been the Black Sea or Caspian, as known to dwellers on the steppelands to the north. It seems useless, however, to speculate in any detail on such points, or to seek to identify any natural rivers as the original Vāžhvī Dāityā or Rañja—especially since the wandering Iranians of old appear to have been as unimaginative as any other colonists in the matter of place- and river-names, using traditional ones for the new mountains and streams which they discovered as they moved from place to place. Thus it is often impossible to be certain whether a particular name in the Zoroastrian books represents a mythical or an actual place; and if the latter, to know what point of time (and hence locality) the usage should be assigned. So wherever an

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89 Cf. G.Bd. XIV.12 (BTA, 129), where as Maṣya and Maḥṣak utter thanksgiving they say: "Ohramzd created water and earth, plants and animals and stars, moon and sun".
90 On him see, e.g., Gonda, Rei. Indiens I, 186-7.
91 In perhaps the greatest detail by Zachner, Zoroast., 137-40.
92 Mon. Germ. II, 676, see Chadwick, Heric Age, 407.
93 See Chadwick, Cult of Ohrm., 72-80.
94 Herodotus VIII.31.
95 Xenophon, Hell. VII.1.38.
96 Notably in the village of Cama near Yazd, where the fire-temple is built under the branches of a sacred tree, a splendid old cedar, and the mountain-shrine of Pir-i Sabz between Yazd and Ardekan, which is overhung by a sacred tree growing beside a spring.
97 For the cypress of Kishmar, said to have been planted by the prophet himself, see Jackson, Zoroastr., 163-4, and further in Vol. III.
original Harā may once have stood, the name Alburz now denotes for Persians the great chain of mountains which runs across the north of their country, dividing the central plateau from the Caspian plain—a range worthy of the ancient name, but one obviously remote from the homelands of the Avestan people, let alone from those of their remote ancestors on the Asian steppes. The semi-mythical Raṛaḥ came in due course to be identified with the Jaxartes, and its companion the Dātīya, “chief of rivers”, 98 with the Oxus, but when Kārśāspa is said to have worshipped at a tributary of the Raṛaḥ this cannot be taken as a certain geographical identification, even if it were established when this great warrior lived. The later identifications of these river-names as they occur in the Pahlavi books have been carefully analysed, 99 but are plainly irrelevant to their use in the ancient texts.

Another local name which is evidently traditional, and is also used at times with mythical connections, is Airyanaṃ Vaṛaḥa, in Pahlavi Eranvēj. This is held to mean literally the “Aryan expanse”, 100 and was perhaps once applied to the stretch of country occupied in their annual wanderings by the nomad Iranians. In the Zoroastrian works Airyanaṃ Vaṛaḥa often appears as a mythical land, the place where all the great events of world “history” took place. It was here that Gayōmard and the Uniquely-created Bull stood, one on each side of the Veh Dātī which flowed through it 101 (a statement that contradicts another tenet of the theoretical cosmography, that the Veh Dātī is one of the boundary rivers of Khvaniratha, at whose centre Airyanaṃ Vaṛaḥa lies). It was there that the first animals were born of the seed of the Bull when he was slain, 102 and there air Yima ruled, and came to the assembly of the gods. 103 But just as the name Harā is used both of a mythical mountain (home of Mithra and Arādvī Sūra and supporter of the Činvat Bridge) and also of various local ranges, so the name Airyanaṃ Vaṛaḥa appears to have been used both of a mythical land at the centre of the world, and also of wherever the “Airyas” or Avestan people found themselves living. (In the latter application it appears synonymous with Airyō.sayana, the “dwelling-place of the Iranians”, YI.10.13.) 104 Hence at some time it came to be applied, it seems, to Khwarezmia. So one has the contradiction that in the Vendidad (Vd.1.2) Airyanaṃ Vaṛaḥa is described as “the first, the best of dwelling-places and lands”, and yet is said to have a winter of ten months’ duration and a summer of two months (Vd.1.3), which is held to be a tolerable description of the Khwarezmian climate. 105 Later still, when the influence of the Magi led to a transfer of the old traditional names to Media, Eranvēj was located “in the region of Azarvēj”, 106 that is in, the north-west of Iran instead of in the north-east.

The basically simple, schematised world-picture of the ancient Iranians was dully elaborated to accommodate the more striking geographical facts which were actually known to them. Thus in addition to the mythical Vourukaša, itself of sweet water, three large salt seas were recognized, in Pahlavi the Pūḍig (Av. Pūṭīkta), Syāwūṃ and Kamrūd. 107 Of these the biggest was the Pūḍig, whose name comes from the base pu “cleanse”. This sea was tidal, and was held to be directly connected to Frāhkhwark (Vourukaša). The ingoing tide was thought to carry pure water back into Vourukaša, while the outgoing one, driven by high winds, bore all impurities away from it. 108 What stretch of actual water was originally identified with the Avestan Pūṭīkta remains unknown, but in Sasanian times the Zoroastrian priests gave this name to the Persian Gulf, and regarded Kamrūd as the Caspian and Syāwūṃ as the Black Sea. 109 There were reckoned to be 23 lesser salt “seas” or lakes 110 (the same word is used for both), of which the most famous was Lake Kāsaōya (Pahlavi Kayānuš) which figures largely in Zoroastrian tradition. Various other small lakes or seas were listed which were of fresh water. 111

As for rivers, at one time, it seems, there were held to be eighteen of these, apart from the Veh Rūd and Arang; 112 but the Bundahisn names many more, including the Tigris (Dīglī) and Euphrates (Prāt), 113 so that it is plain that scholar-priests made constant additions to an original skeleton geography. At the end of the section devoted to rivers it is said: “There are other numberless waters and rivers, springs and channels. From their sources men have drunk. The origin of these waters is one,

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98 GBd. XVII.15 (BTA, 155).
99 See Markwart, Wandel und Arang.
101 GBd. 1a.12-13 (BTA, 25) with Vd. 1.2.
102 GBd. XIII.3 (BTA, 119).
103 Vd. 3.21.
104 In YI, 10.14 there is a description of Airyō.sayana which accords broadly with the identification of this area with Greater Khwarezmia, see Gherdavitk, AHM, 174-6. The actual geographical data given in this verse are followed immediately, in v. 15, by an enumeration of the seven mythical harūrs.
105 See Benveniste, art. cit., 271.
106 GBd. XXIX.12 (BTA, 257).
107 GBd. X.7 (BTA, 101).
108 See Vd. 5.18-19, GBd. X.8-9 (BTA, 103).
109 GBd. X.14-15 (BTA, 103).
110 GBd. X.7 (BTA, 102).
111 GBd. X.17 (BTA, 103).
112 GBd. X.12 (BTA, 105).
113 GBd. X.6 (BTA, 107).
(although) in various lands and places they are called by various names”. All, that is, are held to derive ultimately from the river Haravaiti as it flows down upon the sea Vourukasha and out from there. Similarly the names of mountains, already fairly numerous in the Avesta, are multiplied in the Pahlavi tradition; and in addition to the many listed in the Bundahišn it is said: “The local mountains which are in every place, in each locality and land...are many in name and number”. There were reckoned in fact to be 2244 such diverse peaks, all held to have grown up from the “roots” of Haravuz; and there are also the “little hills, those which have grown up bit by bit in various places”. Behind so much diversity and plurality there lay for the old Iranian thinkers a fundamental unity, a common origin. The same is true of plants and animals, held all to come from the one plant and the Uniquely-created Bull. Lists are given in the Bundahišn of plants and creatures arranged in various categories—for instance animals are grouped in five “classes” as in the Avesta: domestic animals, wild ones, and those that fly and swim and burrow beneath the earth. These classes are then sub-divided into genera and species, and the members of each species enumerated. Numbering is in general much used, and the lists given evidently provided mnemonic catalogues, this being how scholastic learning was formulated in the priestly schools, to be transmitted orally over innumerable generations. Much of what survives in the Pahlavi books has clearly been added to and elaborated since pagan times; but there can be no doubt that the fundamental doctrine of the six creations was already established before Zoroaster’s day, the achievement, doubtless, of many thinkers. As has been observed: “For the creation of a world-system, however fantastic and erroneous this may be, prolonged preoccupation is required with questions especially concerned with this subject.” Iranian cosmological theories must have been slowly evolved by the scholastically inclined, whose dominating interest would have been with the origins and physical nature of this world, rather than with moral and spiritual problems, but who nevertheless, in keeping with their culture and times, saw creation in all its aspects as being the handiwork of the gods.

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114 GBd. XI a.30-1 (BTA, 111).
115 GBd. IX.31 (BTA, 97).
116 GBd. XI-3 (BTA, 93).
117 GBd. IX.45 (BTA, 99).
118 GBd. XIII.9 (BTA, 119).
119 GBd. XIII.10 ff.
120 Kirfel, Kosmographie, 28*.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE PAGAN CULT

The Iranians of old, believing themselves to be living in a world created and sustained by many divine powers, evidently devoted much time and thought, wealth and energy to pleasing the gods on whom their lives depended. The purposes of their worship were plainly complex; but broadly speaking they offered gifts and praises with two main intentions: to win divine favour for themselves as individuals, so that they might prosper in this life and the next, and to strengthen the gods for the common good, so that they might be better able to maintain the physical world which is man’s present home. The pagan philosophy in this latter respect is vividly expressed (although in partly Zoroastrian terms) in Yasti 6, the hymn to the sun-god: “When the sun ascends, the Ahura-created earth is purified...the running water is purified...all creation possessing aša is purified...And if the sun were not to rise, then the daēves would destroy all that is in the seven karvârs. Not one of the heavenly gods would find a place to abide or stay in this corporeal world. He who sacrifices to the life-giving sun, magnificent, swift-horsed, in order to resist darkness, in order to resist the daēves born of darkness...he rejoices all the divine beings of the heavenly world and this world” (Yt. 6.2-4). Similarly, as we have already seen, rains were held to fall and plants to grow through the power of particular gods, who likewise needed to be strengthened by worship in order to perform their tasks. So Tisraya cries aloud, driven back by the demon Ağaša: “Woe to me! misery, O waters and plants!...men do not worship me now...If men would worship me...I should take to myself the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, ten channelled streams” (Yt.8.23-4). When having been duly worshipped he attains this strength, he calls out a second time: “Well is me! well, O waters and plants!...well shall it be, O lands! The courses of waters shall surge out unhindered for the large-seeded corn, for the small-seeded grasses and for the corporeal world” (Yt.8.29). The worship thus offered not only gives the god new power but causes him to look kindly on the worshipper. So Mithra is represented as saying: “Who is he that worships me...? On whom may I bestow riches and fortune,

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1 Cf., e.g., Y. 10.6 (Haoma growing according to the measure in which he is praised).
on whom health of body, on whom possessions affording much comfort? For whom shall I raise noble progeny hereafter?" (Yt.10.108).

The following statement about sacrifice in general applies fully to observations in ancient Iran: "In any sacrifice there is an act of abnegation since the sacrificer* deprives himself and gives. Often this abnegation is even imposed upon him as a duty. For sacrifice is not always optional; the gods demand it. . . . But this abnegation and submission are not without their selfish aspect. The sacrificer gives . . . partly in order to receive. Thus sacrifice shows itself in a dual light; it is a useful act and it is an obligation. Disinterestedness is mingled with self-interest. That is why it has so frequently been conceived of as a form of contract". To this day Zoroastrians put all major acts of worship, which are invariably accompanied by offerings, under the protection of Mithra, lord of the contract.4

To judge from the similarity of ritual offerings still made by Zoroastrians and Brahmans, these belong to a tradition deriving from the Indo-Iranian past.5 Those of the Zoroastrians include, in the various major rituals, milk, pure water, and the sap of plants, i.e. haoma and the pomegranate; corn (in wheaten cakes); fruit and vegetables; butter and eggs; domestic animals and fowls.6 In lesser ceremonies wine also is consecrated. The general term for such offerings appears to have been myazda, Skt. miyêha, métha, which was often used of the blood sacrifice, but probably meant originally the pith or essence of any offering, that part

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4 The word "sacrifice" was coined by the English translator to render "sacrificant", as defined from the subject to whom the benefits of the sacrifice accrue, distinct from the priest who actually despatches the victim. The "sacrificer", that is, the Vedic yajamâna, the Zoroastrian giver of the ofrãmûnû (see above, p. 10)

5 See Boyce, BSOAS XXXII, 1969, 26-7; and cf. Thieme, *Mitra* and *Anvôyana*, 84.


Animal sacrifices have been abandoned at the major rituals by both communities, Parsi and Zoroastrian, probably since the end of the last century; but they are still offered on some other occasions by a minority of Iranian Zoroastrians.

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8 See, with references, Boyce, *JRAS* 1966, 105.


10 Ibid., 13.


12 Hubert-Mauss, op. cit., 97. On the soul of the animal wrongfully slaughtered not reaching *Gün* Uryan see Yt. 14.54-6 (on which verses see further below, p. 171).
In the Pahlavi books it is stressed that to take life except in this way, as a sacrifice devoted to the divine beings, is to be guilty of the sin of “destroying existence” (būdyōsadāh).¹³ and certain religious rites were prescribed therefore at the killing even of wild animals. In Iran the belief appears to have been that the creature’s consecrated spirit was absorbed into Gāuš Urvan, the “Soul of the Bull”;¹⁴ and it seems probable that the origin of this divine concept was indeed in the sacrifice itself, the repeated “release” of the spirits of individual animals creating the personification which is the sum of them all. (It was evidently later that theologians identified Gāuš Urvan with the soul of the Uniquely-created Bull, from whom all animal life had come,¹⁵ and so established a cycle and a unity, with animals tracing their physical life from the Bull’s seed, and their souls returning at death to be re-absorbed in his soul.) That the thoughts of worshippers were directed at a sacrifice to the soul of the victim, in Iran as in India, is shown by the following passage in the Yasna Hāptahātī, that part of the Zoroastrian liturgy which once accompanied the central act of the blood sacrifice. There those part reverence “Gāuš Urvan and (Gāuš) Tašan, then our souls and (those) of the domestic animals which nourish us . . . and the souls of useful wild animals” (Y.39.1-2).

In the remote pastoral period of the Indo-Iranian peoples, when they were dependent on their herds of cattle, the sacrificial beast must regularly have been the cow or bull; and this continued to be the most highly regarded offering, both because of costliness and because of the religious symbolism in connection with the first, creative sacrifice of the Bull.¹⁶ Even in the days of their impoverishment the Zoroastrians of Yazd made this great offering yearly at what seems to have been an ancient shrine to the waters, a practice maintained until the late nineteenth century.¹⁷ When the horse was domesticated among the Indians and Iranians (probably after 2000 B.C.) the horse sacrifice also became one of great worth and charged with significance. In the yahās horses are regularly mentioned among the beasts offered up by kings and heroes;¹⁸ and in historical times horses were especially devoted to the sun,¹⁹ “under the notion” (Herodotus records) “of giving to the swiftest of the gods, the swiftest of all mortal creatures”.²⁰ They were also, it seems, sacrificed for the souls of the illustrious dead, to ensure them a place in sun-illumined Paradise.²¹ Occasionally in the Avesta itself a stipulation is made about the nature of the animal appropriate as offering to a particular god. Thus both Tīṣṭra and Varāthraghna should receive only an animal that is all of one colour,²² whereas Mithra might be worshipped, it seems, with offerings of all colours and many kinds—not only the cow and bull, sheep and goats, but also winged fowl.²³ To judge from current practice, once a particular beast had been devoted to a divine being (which might happen months before the sacrifice took place) no other could be substituted, for any reason whatsoever: that animal belonged to the god.²⁴

It is the common practice among Indians and Iranians, as we have seen, to devote each sacrifice to a particular deity, who is called down by name, with the proper ritual words, in order to hear the praises offered him and to receive the gifts of his worshippers. Thus in the hymn to Arādvi Sūrā the goddess is invoked: “Because of this sacrifice, because of this prayer . . . come down, Arādvi Sūrā Anāhītā, from those stars above to the Ahura-created earth, to the sacrificing priest, to the overflowing, hollowed hand, that you may aid him who, devout, brings you offerings . . .”²⁵ Many boons, it is said, were sought of this goddess. “Brave warriors will ask of you swift horses and the supremacies of fortune (khvarnah). Priests who recite . . . will ask of you wisdom and holiness . . . Maidens will ask of you a strong master in the house. Women giving birth will ask of you an easy delivery. And all these things you, having power, will grant them,

¹³ See Boyce, BSOAS XXX. 1967, 42-3.
¹⁴ E.g. Yi. 5.21 (a standard and recurrent formula).
¹⁵ See Xenophon, Anabasis, IV. 5.35; VIII. 3.12.24; Philostratus, Life of Apollonius, I.31.
¹⁶ Herodotus, I.210 (with specific reference to the horse-sacrifices of the Massagetae).
¹⁷ Cf. the horse-sacrifice at the tomb of Cyrus, see above, p. 122.
¹⁸ Yi. 8.58: 14.50.
¹⁹ Yi. 10.119 (pace Gershevitch. AHM, 370-4, who considered this verse in isolation from the general background of Zoroastrian religious observance; see Boyce, JHS 1966, 109 n. 4).
²⁰ Thus, for example, twin lambs may be born and one dedicated from that moment to Mithra (Mīhr). If one should thrive less well than its brother, still when the time of Mithra-gān comes it is not permissible to substitute the fatter beast, even to do greater honour to the god. For an incident concerning a dedicated animal see Xenophon, Anabasis IV. 5.35.
²¹ Yi. 5.132.
O Arādvī Sūrā Anāhlītā. 28 Particular boons sought in the yaštās were that a worshipper might escape a peril, 29 or triumph in a riddle-contest, 30 or defeat a named foe in combat. 31 Most petitions were in this fashion for material things; and similar prayers might be addressed to diverse divinities, in accordance with the Indo-Iranian tendency to attribute "to any great god all the powers which are important to men." 32 The gifts bestowed by Mithra are explicitly said, however, to be in part spiritual ones, as might be expected from the great ethical Ahura; for as well as giving fatness and flocks, power and progeny, he also bestows the quality of being əsāram, an upholder of order, and the gifts of fair fame and peace of soul, and protection from the armies of falsehood. 33

Although sacrifices were regularly accompanied by prayers for immediate benefits to the sacrificer, it was evidently felt that, since they were also intended for the pleasure of the gods, they were in themselves meritorious and constituted a steadily increasing treasure laid up by a man in heaven during his lifetime, which would help him attain blessedness hereafter. So Mithra is thus addressed by his worshippers: "May you hear our sacrifice, O Mithra, may you be pleased with our sacrifice, O Mithra, may you be seated at our sacrifice, may you attend upon our offerings, may you attend upon them when they have been sacrificed, may you take them all to your care, may you deposit them in the House of Song." 34 The expression "House of Song" brings to mind the Rigvedic description of Paradise, with Yama playing his flute beneath a fig-tree, and the concept of laying up treasure there, it has been pointed out, 35 underlies Zoroaster's own words in Y.49.10, where he speaks of putting in safety in Mazda's "house" the veneration of the just, with their devotions and sacrificial offerings (iṣā-) to be watched over by Mazda himself. Offerings had also, as we have seen, the purpose of strengthening the gods to fulfil their part in maintaining the orderly functioning of the physical world and human society. Every sacrifice had therefore a fourfold intention: the satisfaction of the divinity, material and spiritual gain for the sacrificer, and benefit for all the "world of əsā". With this complexity of purpose, it hardly seems adequate to interpret the Indo-Iranian act of sacrifice simply as a food-offering to the gods, modelled, with its ritual of invocation, prayer and praise, on a banquet offered to an earthly king to secure his favour, with invitation, courteous words and panegyrics. 36 Such mundane acts of hospitality provided, no doubt, a pattern for men's behaviour toward the gods, their divine guests, and the desire to proffer to these unseen visitants offerings which would please them was undoubtedly strong; but it nevertheless appears as only one element in the purpose of the Indo-Iranian sacrifice. Other elements have sometimes been classified as magical, in that the intention behind them was to work directly upon the physical world without the intervention necessarily of a deity. In India these magical elements grew to predominate, so that in time the sacrifice came to be regarded there as a means of controlling the gods themselves, rather than as an act whereby to seek their favour; 37 but in Iran such a tendency, if it existed, was effectively checked by Zoroaster's reform.

In addition to sacrificing to the gods on high, the Indo-Iranians made regular offerings to fire and water, two elements which played a vital part in their daily lives, and which seemed to possess a spirit and animation which led to their being readily personified. The zaathra to fire consisted of a small part of the sacrificial victim, which was placed upon the flames. In Zoroastrian Iran, it seems, no blood sacrifice was ever made without the fire receiving this allotted portion, and the practice undoubtedly goes back far into pagan times. In old Indian ritual the prescribed part of the animal was the omentum (one of the fattiest parts of the entrails). As soon as the victim was slain, an incision was made and the omentum removed and given to the fire. 38 Strabo records from hearsay the same custom among the Persians, who were reported (he says), when sacrificing, to lay "a small piece of omentum" on the flames. 39 He himself at the beginning of the Christian era saw how Persians offered sacrifice to fire "by adding dry wood without the bark and placing soft fat upon it"; 40 and in the 17th century A.D. an Italian visitor to a Zoroastrian fire temple in Isfahan saw fat from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep being offered thus to the

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28 Yt. 5.86-7.
29 Yt. 5.63.
30 Yt. 5.82.
31 E.g. Yt.5.58, 73: Yt. 15.28.
32 See Keith, Rel. and phil. II. 331.
33 See Yt. 10.65, 33. 5.
34 Yt. 10.32 (the translation, given in class, of Professor W. B. Henning, who took limāman as a corrupt dative sg. of limāma- "thought, thought for, care, solicitude" (cf. Yt. 19.33). For other renderings of the verse see Gersevitch, AHM, 183-4).
35 Humbach, IF LXIII, 13-4; Die Gathas, I, 145.
36 See Oldenberg, Rel., 308-9; Thieme, ZDMG CVII, 1957, 67-90. On the bâhrâs [barssman] as a seat for the divine guests see Thieme, ibid., 73; Oldenberg, Rel., 344-5; and further below.
37 On this see in detail S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmanas, passim.
38 See J. Schwab, Thienopifer, 112 f.; Oldenberg, Rel., 358-60.
39 XV.3.11.
40 XV.3.14. Darmesteter, ZA II, 254, compared Catullus' description (Ode XC in the Oxford ed.) of the Magian sacrifice: "So that the son [as Magus] may venerate the gods when the chant has been accepted, melting the fat cauli upon the flame."
sacred fire. This observance was continued among the Iranian Zoroastrians down to the early decades of the 20th century. Fat was plainly chosen for the offering because it sustained the fire, encouraging its flames to burn more brightly. Later in India melted butter was often used instead; but the only zaotra to fire attested in Iran continued to be that of fat from the sacrificial victim; and for this there is abundant literary evidence, from the Gāthās down to the Persian Rituāns and Parsi ordinances of modern times, in addition to the testimony of foreign observers.

The rite evidently evolved originally in connection with the hearth fire, whose cult appears to be of high antiquity, belonging indeed to the sedentary Indo-European period. When the Indo-Iranians became nomadic, each family must have carried its house fire in a pot on the seasonal migrations, re-establishing it on a new hearth wherever the tribe pitched its tents. Texts and practice show that the hearth fire remained an object of cult for Zoroastrians even after they established temple fires; and it continued to be of primary importance in the Brahmanic religion also. In the Zoroastrian prayer to fire, the Ātaš Niyāyeš, fire is invoked as "worthy of sacrifice, worthy of prayer, in the dwellings of men (mānānahu mālyākānahu)". To it fuel should be given, "dry, exposed to light", incense (bāoīdhī)-, and due "nourishment" (piṭhau)-. The Fire of Ahura Mazda gives command unto all for whom he cooks the evening and morning meal, from all he solicits a good offering and a wished-for offering and a devotional offering. The Fire needs the service of "one of full age", "instructed", and traditionally each man established his own hearth fire when he set up his household, and this was allowed to go out only when he himself died. The deeply ingrained instinct to give gifts to the divine beings, to sacrifice, was readily evoked by the personified fire, because fire visibly needs offerings and visibly consumes them. Another verse of the Ātaš Niyāyeš runs: "Fire looks at the hands of all who pass by:

What does the friend bring to the friend, the one who goes forth to the one who sits still?" In later times Zoroastrians have said their family prayers regularly in the presence of this "friend", the house fire; and during the centuries in India when the Parsis had only one temple fire, most households there perforce made all their ritual offerings to the fires upon their own hearts. The zaotra to fire can thus be considered as originally a due portion given to the hearth god of the meal which his own flames were to cook for his worshippers. It was indeed a form of sharing, a mutual compact in which each played his immediate part. The same offering, it is evident, was also made to ritual fire at the place where priests performed the high ceremonies. Such fire was, it seems, sometimes kindled especially for the purpose (with bowstring and wood, or flints), sometimes created from embers taken from a hearth fire; and being of the same nature it, like the house fire, received the zaotra of fat. This offering acquired an especial importance in Iran because fire there developed great significance in the general scheme of things as interpreted in the zaotra schools: according to their cosmology, as we have seen, each individual fire represented also the cosmic fire which pervades all the other six "creations", and which is in particular the life force in all animate things, plants, animals and men. Therefore in offering zaotras to either hearth or ritual fire men not only strengthened those particular flames, but through them gave renewed life to the cosmic fire, which itself sustains all being.

The nomad Indo-Iranians depended on fire for warmth and light and cooked food; but water was the very source of life, and the wells and streams at which they and their herds drank were evidently as much venerated by them as the fires upon their hearths. To this day reverence for water is deeply ingrained in Zoroastrians, and in orthodox communities offerings are regularly made to the household well or nearest stream. Indeed it has been truly said that it would be quite as just and reasonable to call Zoroastrians water- as fire-worshippers. One libation which is still frequently offered in the most traditionalist Yazdi villages appears...

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39 J. F. Gemelli-Careri, A voyage round the world (1604), Ch. 7; Eng. version in Awnsham Churchill's A collection of voyages and travels, London 1704, IV, 143a.
40 Y. 29.7; On the meaning of dekhë in this passage as "oblation of fat" see Gershovitch, JRAS 1952, 178; Humbach, F. LXXIII, 1957, 202; Die Gathai I, 82 and II, 17; Zehnder, Daun, 34 with 325 n. 8; Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 32.
41 For references see Boyce, JRAS 1966, 100-10; Hinning Mem. Vol., 77-8.
43 AN, 7.
44 AN, 16.
45 AN, 8. The word piṭhau- is a derivative of piṭu- "meat".
46 AN, 13.
47 AN, 8.
48 AN, 14.
49 See Boyce, BSOAS XXXI, 1968, 66 n. 100; Kotwal, BSOAS XXXVII, 1974, 664-9.
50 The sacrificial fire (ahavaniya) of ancient India was maintained by a rich man at his own house, together with his hearth fire, (gūrhapaiya), and a third fire, the dakhśindī. Only the gūrhapaiya was, however, kept continually alight, and embers from it were taken to recreate the other two fires for rituals; see Oldenberg, Rel., 348-52; Hillebrandt, Ritus-liturgiaus, 68 f. (on the house fire and its cult). For the highest ceremonies fire was kindled anew, see Oldenberg, ibid., 351; Gonda, Rel. Indiens 1, 139, with references. The house-fire was allowed to die with its own, as in Iran.
51 See above, pp. 140-41.
52 C. P. Tiele, Geschichte der Religion im Altertum, German transl. by G. Gehrich, II, 179.
ancient both in character and name; for it is called āb-zēr, that is, the "zaothra to water".58 It consists of milk to which are added two things from the vegetable kingdom (such as flower-petals, or herbs, or small fruits). This libation is poured slowly into the water with recital of Avesta, usually by a priest, but sometimes also by women or girls. It seems probable that it owes its ingredients to cosmic speculations of far-off pagan times: the "creation" of water nourishes plants (represented by the vegetable offerings) and both directly and through them cattle (represented by the milk); and so elements of these other two "creations" are returned to it, consecrated by holy words, in order to strengthen it to continue its life-giving activity. The intention is thus the same as with the zaothra to fire, to sustain the object venerated; and again, each single well or stream was regarded as being linked with the cosmic water, since it had its ultimate source in the sea Vourukāša. All the water in the world was held to return there periodically; and in the Bundahish (which contains so much ancient material) it is said that water which receives more libation than impure matter (āb kē hikhr ham ud zōhr wīz) goes back to its source in three years, whereas otherwise it takes nine.54 By making these libations, therefore, the worshippers were helping to maintain the creation of water, and thereby the whole world, in purity and good order.

It is impossible to establish precedence between domestic observances and priestly rites, to know, that is, if the former were simplifications of the latter, or the latter evolved from the former; but the fact is that the three things which we have by now considered, namely food-offerings to a particular god, the offering to fire and the offering to water, all of which can be separate acts performed by the laity, are also the elements which together make up the main Indo-Iranian priestly rite known in later times as the yajna or yasna, that is, "the act of worship". The pagan ritual evidently evolved considerably, however, after the separation of the two peoples, so that although the components remain the same, the services have developed very different characters in India and Iran; and how far, on the Iranian side, this is due to advances made already in pagan theology, how far to Zoroaster's reform, must inevitably remain a matter for reasoned speculation. What distinguishes the yajna/yasna from other acts of worship is that it centres on the preparation and offering of somā haoma. This offering has been termed the focal point of Vedic religion, and it was evidently of great importance also in pagan Iran; for together with the animal and human sacrifices it reproduced, it seems, one of the three great prototype sacrifices which in the beginning brought life into the world56—in its case the life of plants, which sustain the existence of animals and men. A comparison of texts and observances makes it appear probable, however, that the cult was elaborated and given enhanced significance by the Indians, whereas, being essentially amoral, it was circumscribed and subordinated in ethical Zoroastrianism, although elements of its old power survive strongly even in the reformed faith.

The Indo-Iranian *sauma was a plant which, when crushed, yielded a substance that, mixed with water or milk, was a powerful stimulant. It took its name simply from the verb saw- "press, crush"; but what the original plant was which was so called is much debated.56 The Brahman said explicitly that they no longer possessed the soma of old, that it did not grow in their land. What was prepared in the yajna was therefore merely a substitute. The matter is not discussed in the Zoroastrian texts; but for hundreds of years the Iranians have known and used a species of ephedra as haoma.57 This plant grows throughout Central Asia as well as on the mountains of Iran. It has tough, fibrous stems which need to be crushed to release the pith,58 and this pith has hallucinatory properties.59 The plant corresponds, moreover, well enough with the (admittedly brief and vague) descriptions of haoma given in the Avesta; and if one considers the immense conservatism of the Iranians, it seems very possible that some species of ephedra was in fact the original *sauma of the Indo-Iranians. This plant does not, however, satisfy the much more elaborate and poetic descriptions of soma to be found in the Vedas, and it seems un-

58 See above, p. 141.
54 The identity of soma has recently been made again a matter of lively discussion, initiated by G. Wasson in his massive work Soma, divine mushroom of immortality, Ethnomycological Studies I, New York/The Hague 1969, with a contribution by W. D. O'Flaherty, 65-147 (reprinted, without the illustrations, New York 1971). He proposed an identification of soma which was not among those previously considered, namely with the fungus amanita muscaria. His book was the subject of a review article by J. Brough, SBOAS XXXIV, 1971, 331-62, which brought a rejoinder from Wasson, Soma and the fly-agaric, Botanical Museum of Harvard University, 1972, at the end of which are listed the principle reviews (by Samarkists, botanists, ethnologists, and others) of his original book. To these add since J. Gershovitch, "An Iranists's view of the Soma controversy", Mémorial Jean de Menasce, ed. P. Gignoux, Paris 1975, 45-75.
57 O'Flaherty aptly Wasson, Soma, the divine mushroom, 120 f.; Brough, Haning Mem. Vol., vol. 62, both with references.
58 Pulverizing in a mortar appears to have been the Indo-Iranian practice, maintained by Zoroastrians, for which the Brahman substituted pounding on a stone covered with a bull's hide, see V. Henry in Caland-Henry, L'Agnistoma II, 474 f.; Hillebrandt, Ritual-literature, 15. That *sauma needed to be crushed appears to be against its identification with a soft-fleshed mushroom, see Brough, art. cit., 338-9 (with Wasson's response in Soma and the fly-agaric, 41-2; there however he ignores the Iranian evidence in suggesting that the site of pounding may have been a late development).
59 For various observations on ephedra and its effects see O'Flaherty apud Wasson, Soma, divine mushroom, 126, 138, 140-3; Brough, art. cit., 356-1.
likely that the identity of the ancient plant will ever be decided with agreement between students of the two religions.

From the Avesta one learns that the haoma plant was “of many kinds” (pouru.saredha),60 which means presumably that, as with the ephedra, there were many different members of its botanic family. It was green (zairi.gaona)61, with plant shoots,62 fragrant,63 fleshy or milky (gau-man)64, and grew on mountain tops and in river valleys,65 being nurtured first on high Harâ by clouds and rain brought by the south wind from the sea Vourukâsha.66 When crushed it yielded a drink which exhilarated and gave heightened powers; and this was the only intoxicant (madha) which produced no harmful effects. “All other madha are accompanied by Wrath with the bloody club; but the madha of Haoma makes one nimble”,67 “The madha of Haoma is accompanied by its own righteousness (aša)”.68 The Vedic priests similarly praised soma, contrasting its workings with those produced by a fermented drink (surâ). “Soma is truth, prosperity, light, and surâ untruth, misery, darkness.”69 Soma, it seems, quickened and enhanced those qualities of which each individual man had need: warriors drinking it readily worked themselves up to battle-fury and became formidable foes, whereas the poet experienced through it a sense of inspiration, of possession by divine power, and the priest acquired mantic wisdom.70 The evidence for the haoma cult in Iran is scattered but considerable. The most interesting text concerning it is the so-called Hâm Yâšt, which though it exists only in Younger Avestan is clearly in essence very ancient. It survives as part of the yasna liturgy (Y.9-11) in which it precedes and accompanies the first ritual drinking of the parahaoma (that is, the preparation made from haoma). In the verses spoken before this takes place the worshippers invoke the god Haoma, the “green one”, calling down his intoxication, and seeking from him strength, victory and health.71 He, they say, can grant power to the whole body, ecstasy of all kinds, and the ability to overcome every foe, whether two-legged or four-legged.72 One of his epithets is varsha.73 “victorious”, and still for Zoroastrians it was the practice to solemnise a yasna to Haoma in order to secure the defeat of a hostile army.74 In the epic tradition it was Haoma who helped Kavi Haisravah to overcome the mighty Fragrasyan:75 and there can be no doubt that in ancient times the “warrior” estate had its share in his cult. It is thought that some evidence for this may have been found at Persepolis from the early 5th century B.C., for there the treasure has yielded a surprising number of beautifully wrought stone pestles and mortars, of the kind used in preparing the parahaoma.76 Yet mortars have been recovered, and 80 pestles, most of them inscribed. The inscriptions, in Aramaic, are brief and fairly uniform in character; but they contain puzzling usages and some unknown words, so that their full import is as yet uncertain. The following is a translation of one among them:77 “In the administration of The Fortress’, under the authority of Mithrapâta, the sgan, Vahufarnah made this large pestle of stone, with one large mortar. Under the authority of Dâta-Mithra, the treasurer. Delivery of year 13(?)”. The number of vessels found has led to the suggestion that these were votive offerings, made by men of rank who themselves used the pestles and mortars in the haoma cult; but some of the mortars seem to have been broken and mended before they were inscribed, which makes them hardly worthy of a gift to a god; and not a single drinking vessel has been unearthed. The finds remain at present, therefore, enigmatic.

In the Zoroastrian yasna the first preparation of parahaoma is made from haoma twigs pounded up with pomegranate leaves, infused in pure water and strained through a sieve which once was made of bull’s hairs taken from a sacrificial animal.78 The infusion is now drunk by the priest, representative of the sixth creation, man: but it seems likely (to judge from the text of the Hâm Yâšt) that this first parahaoma is in fact the vestige of the ancient madha which was partaken of formerly by warrior and poet as well as priest—indeed by the initiated of the whole community.79 Probably in olden times it was made simply of haoma infused in water, the pomegranate being a borrowing from the second parahaoma of

60 Y. 10.12.
61 Ibid.; on this word see Brough, art. cit., 340-40.
62 Y. 9.16, cf. Y.10.5, where there is mention of its “roots, shoots and sprigs.”
63 Y. 10.4.
64 Gau-man, Y. 10.12, is a hapax, and its precise significance doubtful.
65 Y. 10.17.
66 Y. 10.10; Yt. 8.33.
67 Y. 10.8.
68 Yt. 17.4.
70 See Brough, art. cit., 339-40.
71 Y. 9.17.
72 Y. 9.18.
73 See Rüdnyat, Unvala, I 284-15, Dhabhar, 278.
77 On this ritual observance, and on the development among the Parsis of the usage of keeping a sacred bull, the parasya, to yield these hairs (parasya) see further in Vol. III.
78 For further, textual, reasons for thinking that this parahaoma was not in ancient times a part of the yasna see below, pp. 263-6.
the Zoroastrian rite, which is purely sacerdotal in character. This is made of three ingredients, haoma, pomegranate and milk, resembling thereby the zaotra to water offered still by Zoroastrian villagers; and the second para-haoma is in fact prepared and offered as a libation, being poured, when the service of consecration is over, into a source of pure water (a well or running stream). This priestly ab-zōhr was always associated, it seems, with the atas-zōhr, the offering to fire, and hence with the blood sacrifice; and this close ritual association is attested in the ancient Yasa Hañiapáhái, which appears to be the Zoroastrian reworking of a liturgy to accompany these twofold offerings. In it both Atar and Apas, Fire and the Waters, are invoked to receive their portions, in solemn ritual terms: “Approach us, O Fire, with the joy of the most joyful . . . “.

Fire and Water thus received their portions at every solemnisation of the yasna, although each service as a whole was also dedicated to an individual god. Haoma too, from whose “body” the offering to the Waters was made, always received his stipulated share of the blood sacrifice, namely “the two jaw-bones with the tongue and left eye”; and in the Hom Yasht the god curses the man “be he priest, farmer or warrior, who harms or withholds his portion”. This fixed share of each sacrifice was, it seems, set aside for Haoma because he was conceived in the pagan mythology as the divine priest—evidently an Indo-Iranian concept, for the same role is attributed to Soma in India (where too soma was regularly offered with blood sacrifice). A mortal priest was entitled to a fixed portion of every sacrifice which he made, and so a share was assigned likewise to the invisible one. In the Mihr Yasht it is said that Haoma “was the first to offer up haomas with a star-adorned, spirit-fashioned mortar upon high Hara”, and as the “swiftly-sacrificing zaotar” he made sacrifices in the spirit world to other gods—Druvāspā, Mithra and Sraoša are named. It seems that it was the repeated consecrations of para-haoma which first created the concept of a god Haoma, just as it was repeated sacrifices of animals which shaped that of Gāuš Urvan; and the fact that the two offerings were regularly made together led in time to the myth of Haoma presiding over both. As often happens in the history of religions, “imagination has given firstly a status and a history and consequently a more continuous life to the intermittent, dull and passive personality which was born from the regular occurrence of sacrifices.” It was presumably because haoma played so great a part in daily life that in this case the divinity thus created acquired a rich mythology, with, naturally, the various aspects of his character being all related ultimately to the plant which he represented. Since this plant was regarded as chief of medicinal herbs (being wholesome for man and beast) the god Haoma was revered as a healer, able to bestow health and strength. Prayers properly addressed to him bring well-being; and if pestilence threatens, a yasna should be solemnised in his honour. Then because of the intoxicating property of the plant, and its ability to awake battle-fury, he became himself a fighting hero. Yet as lord of plants he could also give good harvests, and yasnas were devoted to him so that he might vouchsafe them; and since he could bestow not only fertility but also the highest qualities of mind and body, women prayed to him for illustrious sons. (The heroic Thraētaona and Vrāşāspa were both, as we have seen, born to their fathers because the latter pressed haoma for drinking.) Then, although he is the divine sacrificer, Haoma is compassionate to the animals whom he nurtures through plants, and careful that the rituals should be observed whereby their souls can attain their appointed place in the hereafter. He is therefore regarded, with Gāuš Urvan and Gāuš Tašan, as a divinity with especial charge of animals. In all this, as in his aspect of priest, he was evidently conceived anthropomorphically; yet so close was his associ-
cation with the plant haoma that invocations of him often blend the concepts of divinity and herb. Thus at the beginning of the Hūm Yāst Haoma is represented as approaching Zoroaster himself, who addresses him with these words: "Who are you, O man, the fairest whom I have seen of all the corporeal world?"97 And Haoma replies: "I am Haoma. Gather me, press me for drink, praise me for strengthening."98 In his human shape he is hailed as "green-eyed" (sairi.dōthra)-109 but this greenness comes from the plant. As plant and god he has the epithet of "furthering aśa" (aśa.vazak)-100 which associates him with the Ahuras, the guardians of order. He is therefore fittingly called hukhratu- "of good wisdom"101 (Soma being similarly invoked as subhratu-). Another distinctive epithet of his is dūroṣa- (Vedic dūroṣa-); but the meaning of this is much debated.102

To turn back from this god of the cult to the cult itself, the problem existed, for the Iranians as for other peoples, of how offerings made to the divine beings should be actually conveyed to them. The zādras to fire and water were consigned to these two elements, to be consumed by the one and absorbed by the other—true sacrifices, therefore, which were wholly lost to the worshipper; and in Indian ritual a little of every offering, even of the liquid soma, was placed on the fire, the "mouth of the gods", to be consumed by it on behalf of the divinity concerned. The Iranians, however, gave to fire only those offerings which were intended for it itself (dry wood, incense, fat). As for the gods in general, according to Strabo103 the Persians claimed that they required only the "soul" of the victim; and certainly still today the Zoroastrian priests are at pains to release the "soul" or essence of each offering, conceived of as its odour or bōy, to gratify the divinity. This they do by slicing open fruits and vegetables, grilling wheat cakes, and roasting or seething the flesh of the sacrificial animal. Thereafter almost all of what has been consecrated is divided up, by the man who has made the offering, between priests and the poor, and his friends and kin. Yet there is also a practice, of which the Persians did not perhaps tell Strabo, whereby a portion of the sacrifice is set aside and conveyed to the god in a different way. In the account given in the Bundahišn of the first blood sacrifice to be made by man it is said that the portion for the fire (bahr.i āshāh) was laid directly on the flames, but that the portion for the gods (bahr.i yazdān) was tossed up into the sky, and a vulture swooped and carried it off, "as in recent times dogs have eaten the meat" (būn nadist gōst sagan khward).104 Certainly to this day at holy festivals and solemn rituals orthodox Zoroastrians gather up a little of every kind of food which has been consecrated and give it to a dog, with recitation of Avesta.105 Moreover, the strictly orthodox used never to eat food themselves without first giving something to a dog;106 and it remains the clearly-realised belief in the most conservative villages of Iran that what is thus given to a dog reaches the other world of gods and departed souls. Hence it is general still among pious Zoroastrians of the old school to give a dead person's food thrice a day to a dog for the three days that the soul remains on earth; and at all ceremonies of remembrance a portion of the food offerings is given to a dog, the living intermediary between the seen and unseen. A link between the dog and the souls of the dead is found also in the Vedas,107 so that this belief presumably has its roots in the Indo-Iranian past; but that the dog can act as representative of the gods themselves, receiving on their behalf a portion of the offerings, seems a purely Iranian concept, which perhaps developed only slowly through analogy with practices on behalf of the dead. The usage with regard to the divine beings is today perhaps most clearly to be seen with Haoma's share of the sacrifice. This is now represented in the ritual by the dead animal's tongue; and while this is being consecrated to Haoma it is roasted, which releases the bōy, and thereafter it is given ceremonially to a dog.108

Since the portion of the dog is necessarily small, even with this ritual development most of the offerings remain to be shared among the worshippers. In the case of the blood sacrifice great importance was attached in both Iran and India to seven portions of the inwards of the victim, which in present Zoroastrian usage are called the andām or "parts".109 In Iran these are prepared in an especial way for roasting, and are then consumed with particular concentration of mind and spirit. Especial rites

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97 Y. 9.1.
98 Y. 9.2. For the interpretation by Henning of stoma.mai as "for strength" see apud Boyce, art. cit., 63 n. 4.
99 Y. 5.7-9.
100 E.g. Y. 10.1.
101 Y. 9.23, 10.2.
102 E.g. Y. 9.2. For earlier treatments of this word see Geiger, Die Amla Sponsas, 77 n. 2. Professor Bailey, in a letter to the writer of June 1970, modified the interpretation which he proposed in BSOAS XX, 1957, 53-8, conjecturing that the second element might be anu- "plant", connected with Av. anu.xa, cf. RV anu.xa-m "fodder", the whole word being an adj. meaning "of a pungent plant".
103 XV. 3.13.
104 BGl. XIV.21-2 (BTA, 131).
106 This usage is still observed by a few old people in the Irani villages, see Vol. IV.
107 See above, pp. 116-17.
were used in India also for the preparation of the seven portions, for it was held that they in particular represent the īḍā of the blood sacrifice. "An essential part of all rituals is ... the communal eating of the īḍā, that is, an essential part of the sacrificial food regarded as the 'blessing of the sacrifice'. In the Agnihotra this īḍā is the remains of the sacrificed milk, at the full- and new-moon sacrifices it is a part of the sacrificial cakes ... , at the animal sacrifice, a part of the animal, at the soma-sacrifice a part of the soma drunk after the sacrifice."\[^{110}\] The Avestan word īḍā, etymologically identical with Vedic īḍā/īḍā,\[^{111}\] appears to be used in this same way by Zoroaster himself.\[^{112}\] In India īḍā is personified as a goddess, and a personification of īḍā appears likewise in the Gāthās, notably in Y.50.8, where the expression pādāi ... īḍayā "in the footsteps of īḍā" has been felicitously compared with Vedic īḍayā pādē "in the stepfoot of īḍā", both expressions containing an allusion to the goddess of sacrifice "whose footsteps drop with fat" (gṛhtāpādi).\[^{113}\]

The importance attached by Zoroastrian and Brahman to partaking of the consecrated food and drink leads readily to comparisons between their observances and the communion meals of other faiths; and Hubert and Mauss sought to establish that the blood and soma sacrifices of India both involved the death of a god, and so, through many comparisons with other religious observances, they brought these into association with the "Christian ritual of sacrifice".\[^{114}\] The same comparison has more recently been made by Zaehner with the Iranian haoma-ritual.\[^{115}\] It happens that in Y.11.4 Haoma is called the "son of Ahura Mazda" (a term more frequently applied to Fire). By emphasizing this, and selecting other material to throw into prominence the "death" of the god, his "real presence" in the parahaoma, and his "resurrection", with his death again in the next act of worship, it is possible to present the Iranian haoma-offering as if it were the Christian communion rite in an older and less familiar form. But if all the material is properly taken into consideration in its own religious setting, the haoma-ritual with its intention appears as something very different. As Keith has pointed out with regard to that of soma, this is basically "the offering to the god of the intoxicating drink, which in itself, on the other hand, creates the conception of the god Soma";\[^{116}\] and it is only later in the Brāhmaṇas that the thought is expressed that the pounding of the plant involves the death of soma. The passages containing this idea show, however, that there was "no serious or real feeling for the death of the god: they are products of speculation, not of deep religious conviction."\[^{117}\] In Zoroastrian literature there is not even a trace of such a thought. As for the blood sacrifice, Keith's comments on the Brahmanic observance apply also to the Iranian one:\[^{118}\] "There is not the slightest sign in the elaborate ritual, nor in the formulae which are recorded in full, that there was any idea that the death of the victim was the ritual death of one of the gods, or that the ceremony was a sacrament, in which the worshippers renewed or strengthened their union with the god by a common meal ... The īḍā is the divine power present in the food when eaten: there is no question of the death and eating of a divinity".

This divine power is brought into the offerings through the act of consecration, that is, through sacred words or mathras uttered by the priest, and rituals duly performed by him with right intention. Very great power was attributed to mathras; and in later Zoroastrian practice every ritual act is not only accompanied by sacred words but set around by them, so that they form an invisible barrier between it and the forces of harm.\[^{119}\] This was probably pagan usage also, for the ancient Yasna Haptañhuṣ consists of seven chapters, six of which appear to encircle, in two groups of three, the central one, which originally accompanied the highest point of the ritual, the main sacrificial offering.\[^{120}\] In due course in the Zoroastrian liturgy the whole Yasna Haptañhuṣ came to be enclosed by Zoroaster's own Gāthās, the most sacred of mathras, which again were divided into two groups and set around it to provide it with complete security; and the Gāthās themselves were in time enclosed in their turn by the other texts of the yasna, so that the liturgy grew to be like a fortress with many curtain walls, each helping to give protection and greater strength to what lay at the centre. It was of the greatest importance that such walls should be strong, that is, that the mathras should be properly conceived and spoken, so that the rituals which they accompanied should be fully effective.

The priest performing the rituals was required to be in a state of complete ritual purity, and had to concentrate all his own ritual power,
through his thoughts and the gaze of his eyes, on the objects to be blessed. Once the divine power had been brought into the offerings, only those who might partake of them who were in a fit state to do so. Preliminary lustration was essential, 121 either with pure water or with urine of cow or bull—another practice common to the Indians and Iranians. This ritual requirement meant that cattle were always kept by priests, who were necessarily familiar with their handling; and this is therefore an observance which has given constant life to the ancient cow-symbolism of nomad days. In Iran and India cattle-urine is used for both outward and inward cleansing; but Zoroastrian observance requires that purity of body should be accompanied by a fit moral state. In pagan Iran the qualifications demanded of worshippers tended to be more arbitrary, with moral and amoral conditions intermingled. Thus Aršāvī Sūrā Anāhītā forbade those to partake of her saθhram as who were crazy, or distempered, lying, cowardly or spiteful; but she also rejected the leper, the blind and deaf, and all those physically deformed. 122 The bandit and the prostitute were among those banned from the offerings to Tištrya; 123 and in order to partake of Mithra's saθhram a worshipper must bathe on successive days and nights and undergo ritual chastisement, 124 presumably to drive out sin. Āšā, a pagan goddess of abundance, forbade her offerings to the sterile—old men and women, young girls and boys. 125

The actual place of sacrifice in Zoroastrian and Brahman usage is of great simplicity, and its lack of any permanent features (such as an altar or fixed fire-stand) can readily be understood as being due to millennia of nomadic life on the steppes. All that is needed is a small flat space upon which can be marked out a sacred precinct, now called by the Zoroastrians a pāvī or "pure place", by the Brahmans a vedī. 126 The vedī, usually prepared at the house of the sacrificer, is either slightly raised or slightly sunk, and irregularly shaped, being narrowest in the middle. The pāvī is flat and rectangular, enclosed by a shallow furrow. Nowadays the pāvī is usually a permanent area, stone-floorled, with a fixed "furrow" set in the stone; 127 but it is still permissible to make one in any clean place that can be sanctified and kept sanctified during the course of the ritual. 128 In the Indian rite the vedī is strewn with grass, now called kusa but formerly barhis. The Iranians too used to strew grasses, which they called barsom, later barasman. 129 Two concepts appear to have existed concerning this strewn. It was spread beneath the feet of the sacrificial animal, and the flesh when dressed was laid upon it for consecration, 130 because "the victim has plants as its body; verily thus he (the priest) makes the victim have its full body". 121 It was also thought that the grass formed a seat for the gods when they came as guests to receive the offerings—for one could not expect the divine beings to be ever present in the neighbourhood of vedī or pāvī, as they might be thought to dwell in a temple or permanently holy place. 122 (Temples do not seem to have been established even by Zoroastrians before the 4th century B.C., and had no place in the pagan cult.) Fire was always present at the Indian and Iranian rites, burning in a low container at a level with the priest's eye and hand as he sat upon the ground; and after the ceremony was over, the sanctified strew was burnt, 133 as is the dry vegetable matter of rituals by Zoroastrians to this day. 134 From the strew, it seems, the priests used formerly to take up a handful of the grass and hold it while reciting, apparently to share in its pure and protective powers, 135 conceivably also as acknowledgement that all flesh is grass, and priest and victim kin. In time twigs or rods came to be used for this purpose instead of grass, but in both Iran and India the name for these twigs, held in a bundle by the celebrating priest, continued to be the same as that of the strew. In the Avesta barsom has both meanings. In living Zoroastrianism the custom of the strew has been abandoned, and barsom means only the twigs held by the priest. 136 In Zoroastrianism as in Brahmanism the number of these twigs varies according to the ceremony. 137 Nowadays they are only a few inches long, but ancient sculptures show the barsman as between one and two feet in length.

The vessels and utensils used in the religious services are, like the pre-
cinct itself, of a basic simplicity, and are readily portable. Each thing is purified and consecrated anew (like the pâri) for each ceremony or series of ceremonies; and when the service is over its sanctity ceases and it may be freely handled. The utensils needed for the yasna today appear essentially the same as those used in the Indo-Iranian period, since they and those of the Brahman rite seem in the main to share a common ancestry. They are a container for fire; bowls for the various liquids (water, milk, the parâhoma); a knife or knives; a pestle and mortar for pounding the haoma-twigsof the Avesta, and a hair-sieve for straining the pulp. In the Younger Avesta mention is made of mortars of stone and of metal; and the Persepolis treasury has yielded its beautifully-fashioned mortars and pestles of polished stone, as well as ones of bronze. In present times these vessels are always of metal. The ritual knife must likewise be wholly of metal, haft as well as blade, since other materials (such as wood or horn) are more porous, and it is held that they cannot be properly purified for consecration. The container for fire is also now regularly of metal, although in Iran in the not very distant past clay ones were also sometimes used.

Priestly rituals were not, however, confined to the pâri and the ceremonies performed there. Zoroastrians sometimes call those which may be solemnized within a sanctified precinct in the highest purity "inner" rituals; but there are also a number of "outer" rituals, which are minor ones that may be celebrated anywhere—at home, on the mountains, by streams, or in the fields. One regularly performed is the āfrinagan or ceremony of blessing, which may be solemnized in honour of any member of the pantheon, to reverence him, to secure his favour, or to thank him for benefits received; and this probably continues some form of pagan usage. Animal sacrifice, too, was by no means restricted to the pâri and the priestly haoma ceremony, but was offered also as a separate rite, as the yâstis abundantly attest. It was thus, evidently, that it was observed by

Herodotus in the 5th century B.C., when it was performed in a manner very similar to that still practised at their mountain shrines by the Zoroastrians of Yazd. At such sacrifices the victim (as always, well fed and cared for) is decked out with ribands tied around its horns, and is led or often carried shoulder-high up the mountain to the sound of pipe and drum. There it is borne in joyful procession seven times around the holy place (a living rock144), against the direction of the sun, and then is led away to be killed at a little distance. The sacrificer (who until the present generation was always a priest, the only man sufficiently pure to perform this high ritual act) kisses the animal's cheek before slaying it, in a gesture of kinship and contrition. Certain malihras or passages of Avesta are prescribed to accompany the act of sacrifice; and afterwards the priest consecrates the appropriate portions to Haoma. The rest of the flesh is seethed in a cauldron and partaken of by the sacrificer and those with whom he chooses to share it, some portions being always given to the priest and the poor. These observances appear to be very ancient, of a type probably carried on through millennia by the Iranians at high and holy places, in homage, as Herodotus records, to God, and to "Sun, Moon, Earth, Fire, Water and Winds".

Such sacrifices at Zoroastrian shrines may be made by an individual whenever he wills, and for a variety of reasons—in worship or thanksgiving, as an act of penitence, or in self-dedication to some vow. This was presumably true also in the pagan past. A priest's presence is necessary at this or any other major rite; and it is through the performance of ceremonies that down the generations the Iranian and Indian priests have received the wherewithal to live, sometimes in princely fashion, sometimes humbly. Gifts to the priests, called daḵšitā or the Brahmans, ašōddā by the Zoroastrians, were regarded as an essential part of a ceremony, and

whereas Zoroaster is represented as making the full priestly haoma sacrifice (see VI. 5. 104), heretas, as laymen, offer only the blood sacrifice (see, e.g., ibid. 20-81 and further below, p. 209 with n. 82, on the priestly rite).

144 See Darmesteter, ZA I, Pl. VI (p. bvi). The māh-rūz (a pair of metal supports, crescent-shaped, across which the priest latex the barsum twigs at certain points in the yasna ceremony) has no Indian counterpart.

145 See above, p. 157, n. 28.

146 In India the sieve is of fine wood; for the ancient hair-sieve in Iran see Visserpad 10.2.

147 See Schmitz, Persepolis II, 53 ff. with Pl. 23; R. A. Bowman, Aryan ritual texts from Persepolis, 45-52 with Pl. 2.

148 See Modi, CC, 271.

149 For animal sacrifice as a separate rite in India see Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 73, 121-4; Keith, Rel. and phil. II, 324-6; Gonda, Rel. Índ. I, 147-9. In the Avestan yâstis, Herodotus states, accurately, that the flesh was seethed; cf. the Indian practice at the pāñchabandha, Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 123. Seething rather than roasting was a practical matter at these mountain sacrifices, with no domestic oven to hand.

150 It must be emphasised that it is only the Iranian branch of the Zoroastrian community that maintains these ancient rites of sacrifice, and even in Iran they are in process of being abandoned. On the similarity in intention of the ancient Vedic sacrifices see Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 73.

151 Middle Iranian ašōddā (with its variant ašālawdā) means literally "given to a righteous man", an alavam, i.e. a priest. The Avestan term is not recorded.
were they lacking the ritual would not be complete or effective. They said that the sacrifice as ambrosia belongs to the gods, as rivers to the sea.

In Zoroastrian Iran the cult is unified, and traces of more varied practices are to be found chiefly in prohibitions. Thus in a passage in Yas 5 the prophet is represented as asking Aradvi Sūrā how sacrifices should be made to her, and she replies that zakthras may be offered only between sunrise and sunset. If any are offered during the hours of darkness, then “these zakthras which come to me too late... the daevas receive them, running, clapping their hands, leaping, shouting, because, not being received (by me) they go in sacrifice to the daevas.” In the Nirangestān it is said forcibly: “He who makes a libation to the Waters between the setting and the rising of the sun does not better than if he were to cast it into the jaws of a... dragon.” Similarly in the Brāhmanas evil powers are represented as ever vigilant and hopeful of intercepting the offerings made to the gods. In both Iran and India the morning is regarded as the most auspicious time for religious rites; but whereas in Vedic India this was merely the favoured time, in Zoroastrian Iran there is an absolute prohibition against celebrating the yasna at any other period of the day. In India it is permissible to make an offering of soma after sunset, so that there may in this be a divergence between the aburic and daevic cults; or the distinction may lie between Zoroastrianism and Iranian paganism. Moreover, even before hostility developed between Zoroastrians and Iranian pagans, the two groups of gods, there must have been beliefs in evil powers which might benefit from wrongly-offered worship, and so grow strong to man’s detriment—hence, evidently, the insistence that rituals and prayers should be carried out exactly, so that worship might be effective and please the divinity for whom it was intended. For it is only when well-worshipped (huyāšta-) that the god is favourable. “Who” (demands Mithra) “thinks that I am to be worshipped with a good sacrifice (huyāšti-), who with a bad sacrifice (duḥyāšti-)?”199 “Woe to the... man on whose behalf a priest who is not righteous (ašavan-), who is not instructed, who does not embody the sacred word, takes his stand behind the barsman (twigs), even if he spreads the barsman (grass) out fully, even if he performs a long act of worship.”100 “O men, is... Gāus Urvan, created by the Creator, wise, no longer worthy of sacrifice and prayer” (demands the ašavan priest) “since now the daevic Viyāmburas and the men who worship daevas make the blood flow, shedding it like water...?” Since now the daevic Viyāmburas and the men who worship daevas bring to the fire these plants called haperosi-, the wood called nomadhiā?101 Plainly when such obscure black practices prevailed, the souls of the animals butchered in droves, without proper rites, did not ascend to Gāus Urvan, to strengthen and gladden him, and thereby the whole physical creation. Some of the rites thus rejected as “daevic” by Zoroastrians were evidently in origin propitiatory, intended to appease the powers of evil. Among these appears the Old Persian observance described by Plutarch: “... pounding in a mortar a herb called ‘omomi’ they invoke Hades and darkness; then having mingled it with the blood of a slaughtered wolf, they bear it forth into a sunless place and cast it away.” Among the Brahmins propitiatory rites are performed each day. Thus of the five “great offerings” (mahāyajñāh) which are obligatory for householders twice daily, one is an offering for the demons, to be placed by the household rubbish-heap. At high rituals the blood of the animal sacrifice is offered to the powers of darkness, being poured into a hole in the ground to the west of the yajñad. It is part of the greatness of Zoroastrianism that the prophet set his face unflinchingly against any such conciliation of the forces of evil.

As well as private daily observances by each individual, and the daily rites performed by priests for the maintenance of the world, there were evidently seasonal festivals in which the whole community joined. As we have seen, pegan Iran had its religious calendar, going back, it seems, to Indo-Iranian times, since Indians and Iranians had in common a religious year of 360 days, divided into 12 months of 30 days each. In India this is still used by Brahmins, and is called the savana year, because by it were

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189 See Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice, 90-1; Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 140-1. On the basis of the Brāhmanas Gonda (Rel. Indiens I, 43) goes so far as to say that it is wrong to render daevs as “priestly recompense” since it is rather itself a sacrificial gift given to the priest, “through which the sacrifice is strengthened and completed”; but this typically Brahmanic concept finds no echo in Zoroastrianism.

190 See Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 16.

191 Yt. 5.95; cf. Vd. VII.79.

192 Nirangestān 48, see Darmesteter, ZA IIII, 77. Benveniste, Rev. Ét. Arméniennes VII, 1927, 8-4. The same simile occurs in a Persian rišyāb, see Risyāb, ed. Uvvala, I 346.7-8, translated, Dāhshāh, 366, where it is said that to give alms to the wicked “is like putting food into the mouth of a dragon.”

193 See Hillebrandt, Ritualliteratur, 73.

194 See Boyce, BSOAS XXXIX, 1969, 26-7.

195 See above, p. 122.
regulated the seasonal pressings of soma. The savana year is an artificial one, which is kept in relation with the natural year by the fairly frequent intercalations of a thirteenth month; and the ancient Iranians too are said to have intercalated frequently (every 6 years, in theory at least) to keep their religious year in accord with the seasons. The "Avestan" people, like others, must have distinguished the months by names; but the only pre-Zoroastrian month-names to survive are those of the Old Persians. The meanings of these are by no means wholly clear, but they seem to be of a mixed kind, referring to farming activities, religious observances and the like.\[167\]

In this old religious calendar there were evidently a number of feast days. The Indo-Iranian year appears to have been divided into two seasons, called by the Vedic Indians ayana. One reckoning of these ayanas was that they ran from the spring to the autumn equinox, from the autumn to the spring. For the Indians the first of these was "spring and summer and the rains", and this they called the "season of the gods" (devayāna); the other, autumn and winter, being the time of darkness and death, was the "season of the fathers" (pitṛyāna).\[168\] The pagan Iranians appear to have marked the dividing equinoaxes, which they too considered as the poles of the natural year, by two great feasts. That of the spring equinox is still kept joyfully by Zoroastrians, and probably many features of the present festival go back to pagan times, for it is essentially an occasion for rejoicing at the end of winter, and is celebrated out of doors amid the renewed greenness of earth.\[169\] The feast of the autumn equinox appears to have been dedicated of old to Mithra, and is known from Achaemenian times as the Mithrakāna (later Mihragān). The festival was thus celebrated when the sun with which Mithra is linked had achieved its yearly task of ripening the crops and bringing increase and fatness to herds.\[170\] Sacrifices were accordingly made to Mithra in thanksgiving. In some Iranian villages Zoroastrians still bring an offering from their crops to the fire-temple at Mihragān, and each household then sacrifices an animal to the yāstrā.\[171\] As well as being a thank-offering, the blood sacrifice at this festival had probably a symbolic meaning also. It may well have been offered, that is, in re-enactment of the death of the mythical "Uniquely-created Bull", from whose body in the beginning sprang the seed of animals and all useful plants, the intention being to ensure that corn and grasses sprouted afresh in the coming year, under the quickening sun, and that offspring were born again to the herd.\[172\] This is held to be one of the purposes of the bull-sacrifice to Apollo at the Athenian Bouphonia, and of similar sacrifices at the harvest-celebrations of other peoples. "The periodical return of the sacrifice at times when the earth became bare assured the continuity of natural life",\[173\] Such significance attaching to blood sacrifice at the Mithrakāna would account for the central part assigned to the offering at this festival, and for the persistence of the rite into the twentieth century. It might also help to account for the essential role of the bull sacrifice in western Mithraism. In Iran itself, as the Mihr Yašt shows,\[174\] any domestic animal may properly be sacrificed to Mithra, for all useful creatures represent the "Uniquely-created Bull". (There the cow/bull sacrifice itself came to be ritually associated rather with Aradvī Sūrā,\[175\] presumably because of the connection of the cow and her milk with fertility and libations to the waters.) There is no doubt that, though animal sacrifice was general in the worship of the Iranian gods, it had a particular significance in the worship of Mithra, who thus had an especial link with the divine sacrificer, Haoma. The old pagan association of animal sacrifice with the intoxicating haoma-offering is perhaps further emphasized by the odd Sasanian observance whereby Mithrakāna was the one day in the whole year upon which it was proper for the king himself to become drunk,\[176\] whereas the gift of 20,000 colts at Mithrakāna to the Persian king by the satrap of Armenia\[177\] was perhaps made at that particular festival because of Mithra’s connection with the "swift-horsed" sun. The ethical side of Mithra was also honoured at his feast, as known from Sasanian and later times; but here the problem of distinguishing between pagan and Zoroastrian elements in his cult is at its most acute, and so consideration of these aspects of his festival is best deferred.

Both Indians and Iranians further divided the year into six seasons, the yāstrā ratatvā or "times of the year" of the Avestan people, although it has

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**Footnotes:**

164 See Biruni, *Chronology of ancient nations*, ed. Sachau, 11.


167 There is no evidence, *paie Dezemil and Widengren*, to associate this festival with either rain or dragon-killing, see above, p. 102 n. 110.

168 See Biruni, *op. cit.*, 223.


170 See above, p. 239.

171 Hubert-Mauss, 74. One of the three great sacrifices of the heathen Scandinavians was *i moti varti ili ars* "at the approach of winter; (this sacrifice) was for plenty" (see Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 5).

172 V. I, 10, 119 (see above, p. 151 n. 23).


174 *Ctesias* apud *Athenaeus, Deipnosophists* X, 45-434d.

175 Strabo, XI, 14-0, 530.
been suggested that the similarity in this case may be due to parallel developments rather than stemming from a common Indo-Iranian system.178 Each of these seasons is marked by a feast.179 Two celebrate the solstices, namely Mādhyā-yāma "Midsummer (feast)" and Mādhyā-yārya "Midyear (feast)". The others were apparently pastoral and farming festivals, which have been interpreted as follows: Mādhyā-yā, zaramaya "Midspring", when cattle were first driven out to pasture, Paitišāhāya "the feast of bringing in the corn", and Ayāthirima "the feast of homecoming", when the herds were brought back from summer grazing-lands. The season introduced by Mādhyā-yā, at the winter solstice, ended with the spring equinox, and on its last day, which was therefore officially the last day of winter, "the season of the Fathers", was celebrated Hamsapatha-maedyaya, the festival of the fravāši.180

It is not known when the year began for the Indo-Iranians, but some suppose it to have been at the autumn equinox,181 for the Iranian word for "year" (Av. saīrd-, OP. thard-) corresponds to Skt. sarvā- "autumn year". "Harvest and the great festival associated with it" have frequently been chosen by peoples of different lands as the turning point of the year, but this turning point need not necessarily be of any wide significance.182 For a pastoral people, who presumably tilled very little of the earth, spring is likely to give more sense of beginnings, with the new grass growing strongly for their herds, and calves being born; while the fact that the festival of the winter solstice was called by them "Midyear" shows that at some time the "Avestan" people regarded the summer solstice as the start of the year. The Vedic Indians too knew two feasts at the solstices, dividing the year for them into uillarāyana and daksināyana, the "left" and "right" seasons183; and this may be older than the division into devayāna and pīyāyana, since observation of the solstices is simpler than of the equinoxes.184 It is, however, perfectly possible that several annual "beginnings" were recognized simultaneously, as has been known with other peoples, for instance the Jews of old: "on the first day of Nisan is the beginning of the year for the kings and for the festivals. On the first day of Elul is the beginning for the tithing of cattle. On the first day of Tishri is the beginning for the years (i.e. the civil calendar), and for the Sabbath year and the Jubilee years, for the plants and vegetables. On the first day of the month Shebat is the beginning for the tree-fruit."185 If the Jews could recognize four new-year days, the ancient Iranians may well have had two or three. But whatever the situation was in this respect when Zoroaster was born, the prophet evidently chose (if choice was then necessary) the feast of the spring equinox to be the New Year for his people, plainly because of the deep religious symbolism which he saw in the annual resurgence of life at this season. He called it, it seems, the "New Day", Middle Persian Nō Rōz;186 and as such it is still celebrated by his followers, and even in Muslim Iran. He also, according to tradition, reformed the five seasonal feasts and Hamsapatha-maedyaya as holy days of his faith, in honour of the great Amaš Spantas of his own revelation and the creations which they guard;187 and it is the fact that in Zoroastrian observance the first of these feasts is Mādhyā-yā, zaramaya, "Midspring", which proves that for Zoroaster the "New Day" fell at the spring equinox, and not in autumn or at midsummer.

A number of other festivals of evidently pagan origin survive as major Zoroastrian feasts, clearly because there was no contradiction between their observance and the spirit of the reformed faith. One which was indeed wholly in conformity with Zoroastrianism was Sada or the "Hundred-Days Feast", which appears in origin an ancient fire-festival, held (like similar festivals in many lands) in the depth of winter, to drive back the forces of cold and darkness and help the sun regain its strength. This feast received its name because it was held one hundred days before Nō Rōz and the return of spring (or, in some places, one hundred days after

178 See Taqizadeh, Old Iranian calendars, 15.
179 On the seasonal feasts, later called gāh or gāhāmbārs, see R. Roth, "Der Kalender des Avesta und die sogenannten Gāhāmbār", ZDMG XXIV, 1860, 698-720.
180 See above, pp. 122-5.
182 See Nilsson, Primitive Time-reckoning, 268 ff.
183 Kaye, Hindu Astronomy, 27; Taqizadeh, op. cit., 14-10.
184 See Nilsson, op. cit., 312-2.
186 It is of course pure conjecture that the prophet himself used an Avestan expression meaning "New Day" for the feast; but there is ample evidence for the existence of the more factual term "New Year" ("nava- saīrd-"), see W. Eilers, Der alte Name des persischen Neujahrsfeastes, Ab. Ak. d. Wissenschaften u. d. Literatur in Mainz, 1953, No. 2, 59; and it seems possible that the name "New Day" was given by him as having an eschatological implication also.
187 Had these feasts originated as Zoroastrian holy days, with no previous history, one would expect them to have had religious names rather than ones linking them to the pastoral and farming year. Traditionally, however, their foundation was ascribed to the prophet (see Biruni, Chronology of ancient nations, 219) and this suggests that it was he himself who adapted the existing seasonal feasts to give cultic expression to his new doctrines. The fact that the names of the festivals survive only in Younger Avestan forms is naturally of no historical significance in itself; it does not, that is, enable one to determine the epoch at which they were first used. Nor can the existence of a harvest festival (Paitišāhāya) prove the lateness of the series, for even in their own nomad days, it is thought, the Indo-Iranians had some knowledge of farming, however limited a part it played in their lives.
the seasonal feast of Ayāthrima, which marked the beginning of winter.188 By Zoroastrians it was (and still is) celebrated with a huge fire lit as darkness falls near a shrine to Mithra (lord of fire and the sun), and close to a stream, since part of its symbolic purpose was to warm the waters and prevent the demon of frost from freezing them fast and so tightening his deadly grip on the world.

As well as this great fire-festival, a feast of the waters, (dedicated in current usage to Arādvi Sūrā), is also evidently of pagan origin, and remained a great annual occasion. Another major festival maintained in Zoroastrian times was the *Tirikāna, Pahl. Tirāgān. This feast, known popularly among the Zoroastrians of Iran as the “feast of Tir and Teštar”, was celebrated as a rain-festival in Yazd and Kerman down to the present century, with a number of pretty observances meant to act as rain-spells.189 It is probable that most other divinities of pagan Iran (except cult-deities such as Haoma and Gāuš Urvan) had their own especial days of veneration, as they have in Zoroastrianism. In addition there must have been, then as later, particular local cults, which probably often, as in Hindu India and Zoroastrian Iran, centred on the veneration of majestic trees, which were honoured as the representatives of the “creation” of plants, which both lives and gives life to men and cattle.190

As for the ways in which festivals were celebrated, in Zoroastrianism the same essential rituals are solemnized at all festivals, with due liturgical modifications—as the mass is solemnized on all holy days in Catholic Christendom. Since the same is broadly true of Brahmanic usage, one may suppose it to have been the case also in pagan Iran. It is likely, therefore, that the essential rites of offerings to the gods, and to fire and water, were made on all occasions, then as now, and that the particular intention of each act of worship was defined by its dedication to a named divinity, and by the recital of special mātrhas and songs of praise. In addition there were evidently annual observances attached to individual cults, in connection with the divinity’s especial powers and functions.

With regard to the celebrants of the rites, presumably in pagan as in later times the laity not only made their own private devotions but also conducted a number of domestic rituals, such as caring for and making offerings to the hearth fire and local stream or well, and preparing offerings for the family frauāsīs; but all major ceremonies were evidently solemnized by priests, who were trained in the proper way to approach the gods. The laity acquired merit in such observances by providing the offerings and rewarding the priests; and they shared in the act of worship by partaking of the consecrated zaathras. The basic similarities in these respects between the Zoroastrian and Brahmanic cults is yet further testimony to the tenacity of the religious tradition of the two peoples, a tradition which in observance as in beliefs seems in many respects to have been moulded and fixed during the far-off days of their shared nomadic past.

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189 See further in Vol. IV.

190 See above, p. 143. For a particular instance of the veneration of a tree in Zoroastrian Iran see Boyce, Festschrift für W. Eilers, Wiesbaden 1967, 150.
CHAPTER SEVEN

ZOROASTER

Materials for the life of Zoroaster are to be gleaned from the following sources: firstly, the Gāthās themselves, which apart from the evidence which they furnish that the prophet belonged, from the language which he spoke, to the north-east of Iran, supply allusively a number of facts about his family and about incidents in his life. It is not known, however, in what order the Gāthās, now arranged metrically, were originally composed, or how many years of Zoroaster's existence they span. Secondly, there is the Younger Avesta. Here the names of the chief personages of the Gāthās recur, and some others are added for Zoroaster's family circle, presumably from living tradition; but there is little reference to events, and virtually nothing biographical. The reason for this is evidently that this material was irrelevant to the liturgical texts which alone survive, and was assigned to two books of the Avesta which were especially devoted to the life of the prophet, namely the Spend Nāsk and Čihād Nāsk. These works, whose age is unknown, have long since themselves disap-

1 In his translation of the Gāthās (Zoroaster, Étude critique avec une traduction commentée des Gāthās, Paris 1948; Eng. transl. by M. Henning, The Hymns of Zarathustra, London 1955), J. Duchesne-Guillemin arranged the hymns in what he suggested might be their original order, judged from their content. See also his article "L'ordre des Gāthās", La Nouvelle Clio V, 1953 (Milanges A. Carnoy), 31-7. It is impossible, however, to hope for finality in this matter. Some scholars maintain that the last hymn in the formal arrangement (V. 53) is not by Zoroaster himself, but this appears to be a minority opinion. M. Molé went further in arguing that none of the Gāthās could be attributed to Zoroaster. He saw them rather as the liturgy "of an office representing the dramatic struggle of two opposed camps, for which the stake is the purification of the world from all evil" (Numen VIII, 1961, 56 = Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 327); and as such, he maintained, they must have been the work of various unknown authors, who made use of the name of Zoroaster (whether or not a historical person) simply as that of an "archetypal" figure. In putting forward this interpretation Molé ignored the artificial arrangement of the Gāthās, which shows that the collection was set in order after the composition of the individual hymns. He also failed to consider the problem of why, unless the Gāthās were invested with some especial sanctity, they should have been preserved in an ancient stage of the Avestan language instead of evolving linguistically, like the rest of the Yasna. His arguments against the "pillars passages" (see below) as evidence for the authenticity of the Gāthās seem likewise unconvincing. In general Molé held that the Zoroastrians' own tradition that their religion had been founded by a prophet evolved late, through adaptation to pressure from Islam and a desire to conform to the pattern of the dominant religion. Such an interpretation cannot be accepted in defiance of all the ancient evidence to the contrary. Studies of the Gāthās down to 1962 have been surveyed by B. Schlerath, "Die Gathas des Zarathustra", OZP LVII, 1962, 565-89, repr. in Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 336-59. See also Duchesne-Guillemin, "Les hymnes de Zarathustra", KHR 1961, 47-66.

2 See West, SBE XLVII, ix-xvi.
the respect that such a name implies. It appears to be the Old Persian form of it, *Zara.vatra, which yielded Greek Zoroaster, whereas the Medean *Zarat.ustra produced Middle and later Persian Zardust. The name of the prophet's father (like those of several other persons connected with him, including his great-grandfather), was compounded with the word aspa "horse", Pourušaspa signifying "possessing gray horses"; and his mother's name, Dughdhovā, means "one who has milked, milkmaid".

These names may well have been traditional in his family, rather than having any particular relevance to the circumstances into which he himself was born. According to the tradition he had four brothers, two older than himself, two younger. Their names are given in a late Pahlavi work, but owing to the ambiguities of the Pahlavi script it is not certain how exactly they should be read.

Nothing is known of Zoroaster's parents except their names; but whatever Pourušaspa's own calling, it seems that Zoroaster must himself have been dedicated from childhood to that of a priest. In the Gāthās (Y. 33.6) he refers to himself as zaotar, that is, a fully qualified priest; and in the Younger Avesta the more general term, āhrāvan, is used of him (Yt. 13.94). The Gāthās themselves, to judge from their intricacy of style, could only have been composed by a man who had undergone a rigorous professional training, which enabled him to pour passionate new thoughts into an elaborate and conventional literary mould. General evidence concerning the priesthood from India and Iran shows that this training began ordinarily at about the age of seven, when a child would be consigned with others to the care of a religious teacher. From that time onward his studies would necessarily claim most of his waking hours, for there was much to learn: rituals and their significance, the art of composing mañtras and duly invoking the gods, priestly lore about the nature of this world and the next; together with all the complexities of polytheistic beliefs.

After finishing the basic training undergone by all aspirants to the priest-
The prophet must have continued studying in a zaotar school, where deeper theological questions were pondered. The Gāthās and Vedas together suggest that some opposition was sensed of old between the cults of daeva and ahura, and argument and controversy were probably lively on this theme among his people. Zoroaster's great hymns suggest, moreover, that his spiritual gifts carried the prophet on far beyond merely dogmatic studies, leading him to seek out teachers versed in mantic lore, that is, in the inspired apprehension of the divine. He refers to himself as an initiate, vaedēmna, "one who knows," and his great visionary hymn, Y. 44, is composed in a literary convention which "stretches back in unbroken continuity to Indo-European times"—a convention which is known only married to mantic utterances. Although Zoroaster's own contribution to religious thought was to be unique, he belonged, it seems, to a long line of lesser visionaries and priestly seers, whose literary and spiritual disciplines had been transmitted over countless generations.

The only chronology for the events of Zoroaster's life comes from the tradition, which in this respect seems schematized and unreliable, proceeding for the most part in round decades. By the Old Iranian reckoning a boy reached manhood at fifteen, at which age he was invested with the sacred girdle, and probably (in the case of an Ahurvan) initiated priest. According to the tradition, it was five years later, when he was twenty, that Zoroaster left his parents' house against their wishes, and took to a wandering and questioning life. This time-scheme may well be roughly right, since it allows for that period of intensive study which the prophet evidently completed before giving himself up to his own private and individual quest for truth. The depth and intensity of his spiritual search can be deduced from his own words in the Gāthās. Finally revelation came to him (according to the tradition in his thirtieth year, which was conventionally the time of full and sage maturity). Alusions to the manner of it, in Y. 43, are amplified in one Pahlavi account. Here it is said that Zoroaster was attending a gathering met to celebrate the spring festival (Maidhyōī, zarama); and that he went at dawn (according to ancient ritual practice) to fetch water from a river nearby for the haoma-ceremony. He waded deep into the current to draw the purest water; and it was as he returned to the bank—himself necessarily in a state of ritual purity, emerging from the pure element, water, in the freshness of a spring dawn—that he had a vision. He saw standing on the bank a shining being clad in a garment like light itself, who, tradition says, revealed himself as Vohu Manah, Good Intention. By him Zoroaster was brought into the presence of Ahura Mazda and the other five Immortals, before whom "he did not see his own shadow upon the earth, owing to (their) great light." And it was at that moment that spiritual enlightenment came to him. This revelation appears to have been the first of a number of times when Zoroaster saw the Lord, or felt conscious of his presence, or heard his words. As has been justly said: "We do not understand Zarathushtra until we see in the Gāthās the underlying cause of his zeal: the meeting with God ... Zarathushtra's certainty was the result of a vision, a visible manifestation ... he had 'seen' and perceived the Lord." The God whom he thus beheld called the prophet imperatively to his service, a summons which he wholeheartedly obeyed. "For this I was set apart as yours from the beginning" (Y. 44.11). "Who have set my heart on watching over the soul in union with Vohu Manah, and as knowing the rewards of Mazda Ahura for our deeds, while I have power and strength, I shall teach men to seek after the right (asa-)") (Y. 28.4).

Zoroaster therefore betook himself, inspired by his great vision, to the daunting task of preaching a new doctrine to his fellow-men. His

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16 See above, pp. 53-5, 83.
17 Y. 28.5, 48-3. It was partly on account of this that Nyberg sought to associate Zoroaster with shamans; but there is no need to leave the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European traditions of manticism to find his spiritual forbears (see above, pp. 8.9).
19 Zādīpram XVI, 1, ed. BT A 73, xc; transl. West, SBE XLVII, 152-3 (as XX.7).
20 Zādīpram XX-XXI, ed. BT A 77-81, xcii-xliv; transl. West, op. cit., 153-7; on XX.1 see further Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 524-5, with n. 42.
words, which he calls "unheeded" (agusha) (Y. 31.1), fell at first upon stony ground. According to the tradition ten years passed during which he converted only one person to his beliefs, his cousin Maidhyomāh, who in the Varatmans Yāst (Pars. Ety. 13.95) is understood by the prophet himself, as "the first to give ear to the inspired utterance (māthra-) and teachings of Zoroaster" (Yt. 13.95). Although the figure of "ten years" can plainly not be regarded as precise, the process of conversion was evidently painfully slow, and brought with it, it seems, potential danger to the new believer, as the following words suggest: "One coming over to his side ... one must make him known to the kindred (khvāzhā-) in order to protect him from bloodshed" (Y. 46.5). The prophet speaks of his own poverty and the fewness of his supporters (Y. 46.2), and of the wickedness of the kavis and karapaṇs (probably the seers and working priests of the land), whose hostility to himself is implied. He laments to Ahura Mazdā: "To do that which you told me was best shall cause me suffering among men" (Y. 43.11); and he names some of those who most afflicted him: the "very great Bundva" (Y. 49.1) with his "wicked teacher, long ago a rebel from righteousness (āsa-)") (Y. 49.2); and Grāhīma, who sought to prevent Zoroaster's message being heard, and who maintained rites which the prophet rejected (Y. 32.13-14). He also indicts the "kavi's catamite", who in the depth of winter obstructed him and his servants, who were shivering with cold (Y. 51.12).

While he struggled to preach his new religion Zoroaster continued, it seems, to practise as a priest; and towards the end of the great Y. 44 (v. 18) he asks the Lord: "Shall I receive for my reward (mīṣā-), through righteousness (āsa-), ten mares with a stallion and a camel, which were promised to me, O Mazdā, together with your gift of wholeness and life (hauvartatā-and amorostatā)?". The reward spoken of here has been compared with the gifts of cattle made to priests by Vedic princes; and the words have been interpreted as a prayer by Zoroaster for the success of his mission, since such gifts were a sign of approval and acceptance. By another interpretation the prophet here seeks his reward from God himself. The naming together of cattle and life as gifts from on high is traditional, and the general implication of his words, it is suggested, is to ask whether his pious striving will meet its due reward in this life, as well as in the hereafter. Whichever interpretation is right, it is agreed that Zoroaster expresses himself in this verse in an idiom that was wholly natural for a working priest.

After long years, discouraged by the obduracy of his fellow-countrymen, the prophet resolved, it seems, to depart from them, crying out in darkness of spirit: "To what land to flee, where shall I go to flee?" From the kindred and sodality they thrust me out. Not satisfying to me is the community to which I should belong, nor yet the wicked rulers of the land" (Y. 46.1). The expression dāhūn "land" had broad implications, meaning, as we have seen, at times probably no more than one enclosed valley, ruled by its own chief; and the linguistic evidence of the other Greek and Younger Avestan texts suggests that Zoroaster did not in fact travel far from his birthplace. In his new land he was better received. There, it seems, he won the ear of its king, Hutaosa, who in course of time "thought according to the religion, spoke according to the religion, acted according to the religion, ... believed devotedly in and understood the Mazdā-worshipping religion, and gave fair fame to the community" (Yt. 9.26). It was probably through his wife that the king, Kavi Vištāspa, was converted to Zoroaster's teachings, "and came forward as the arm and help of this religion, the Ahuric, Zoroastrian ... and set it in the place of honour" (Yt. 13.99-100).

The conversion of Vištāspa is traditionally said to have taken place in Zoroaster's forty-second year (a figure undoubtedly reached by later calculation). Thereafter the prophet evidently saw his doctrines accepted and spreading steadily, while he himself lived in honour in his new home,
God's prophet among men. For an Iranian priest marriage is a professional qualification; and according to tradition Zoroaster married thrice. His first wife, whose name is not recorded, bore him a son, Isat.vāstra, "Desiring pasture", and three daughters, of whom the youngest was called Pourruistātā "Very thoughtful". Her marriage is celebrated in Y. 53. By his second wife, who is also nameless, he had two sons, Urvatat.nara, "Commanding men", and Hvaro.čīthra, "Sun-faced". His third wife, Hvōvi, did not, it seems, bear him any children. She belonged to the powerful family of the Hvōga ("Possessing good cattle"), and among her kinsmen was Jāmāspa, who is warmly spoken of in the Gāthās, together with Fraasastra of the same house. According to tradition, Fraasastra was Hvōvi's father, and Jāmāspa, remembered as Vištāspa's minister and wise counsellor, was the man to whom Zoroaster gave his own daughter Pourruistātā in marriage, the two families becoming thus doubly related.

According to the tradition, Zoroaster lived to be old, in precise figures (of doubtful worth) until he was 77 years and 40 days. Accepting his teachings involved Kavi Vištāspa in battles with neighbouring princes, who seem bitterly to have resented the establishment of a new faith in their midst. Their names appear in various passages in the yaštās, notably in Y., 5.109, where Vištāspa is represented as asking this boon: "That I may crush Taθhryavant of bad religion, the daēva-worshipper Paθana, and the wicked Aroajat. aspa". In these struggles he was valiantly supported by his brother Zairivair (Pahlavi Sarē), who overcame the daēva-worshipper Humayaka (Y., 5.113); by Zairivair's son Bastavair (Y., 13.103), and by Jāmāspa Hvōga (Y., 5.68-9), who was evidently as brave as he was wise. The chief hero of these wars in the religious tradition is, however, Vištāspa's own son, the "just and valiant Spontōdāta" (Y., 13.103), the Islandiyar of Persian epic. The survival of Zoroastrianism is proof of the tradition that these early battles were fought triumphantly by the upholders of the new faith.

The account of the early days of Zoroastrianism thus furnished by the Gāthās, in conjunction with the yaštās and the Pahlavi books, although meagre and lacking in detail, appears wholly probable in the light of the general history of religions: Zoroaster, a man of faith, had his teachings after truth confirmed by a revelation, and felt divinely called to preach a new doctrine. He met with hostility from those who already knew him, left his own country, and found his message more readily received by strangers. Once a ruler had been converted to the new faith it flourished and became firmly established. Casual details provided by the sources (of proper names, personal relationships and isolated events) give this account, fragmentary though it is, an impressive reality.

The problem is to assign this relation of events, in itself harmonious and acceptable, to its place and time. As for the place, the most important single testimony is the language of the Avesta. Within the family of Iranian languages this belongs "between the Western Iranian dialects as spoken in present-day Persia, and the Eastern dialects on the Indian frontier and to the North of the River Oxus"; and although the material for comparison is scanty, it can at least be said that this ancient tongue has features in common with that recorded in Khwarezmia from the second century A.C. There is nothing, however, to establish exactly where the people who used it lived in Zoroaster's own lifetime. Moreover, "Younger" Avestan, in which most of the Zoroastrian holy works are composed, differs from the "Gothic" Avestan which the prophet spoke not only as representing various later stages of the language, but also through small dialect differences here and there. On the linguistic evidence alone, therefore, the place where Zoroaster was born, and the "land" to which he went, can only be assigned somewhat vaguely to the north-east.

The geographical data are unhelpful, partly because of their paucity (there are none in the Gāthās themselves), partly because of a natural tendency of the Iranians, like any other migrant people, to carry familiar names along with them and give them to new mountains and rivers, lakes and valleys where they settled. A further complication was later added through the pious inclination of followers of the prophet to identify places in his story with ones in their own familiar countrysides. This process probably began early, so that one finds legendary events attached of old to particular places in, for instance, Seistan, far to the south-east, as in

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87 A number of the higher rituals may only be performed by a married priest, one who is fulfilling his allotted role, as a mature man, in the scheme of things.
88 See Y. 13.98, and cf. Gd., XXXV. 36 (BTA 301), Ind., Bd., XXXII.3 (transl. West, SBE V. 143)
89 See Y. 13.139 (where the names of her sisters are also given).
90 See Y. 13.98 and Gd., XXXV. 56; and on the meanings of the names Bartholomeus, Ar., Wb., 1536, 1640.
91 See Y. 31. 17-18 and cf. 46. 16-17; 49. 8-9; 28.8. Fraasastra probably means "having strong camels", see Bailey, TPS 1953, 25. The name Jāmāspa has "horse" for its second element.
92 Henning, "The disintegration of the Avestic studies", TPS 1942, 51.
95 See above, pp. 101-02, and below, Ch. 10.
historical times they came to be associated by the Medean Magi with places in Azerbaijan in the north-west.

As for the time at which Zoroaster lived, since both the known dates—the 6000 years before Plato of the Greeks, and the 258 years before Alexander of the Sassanian priests—have been shown to be artificially calculated on erroneous bases, it has to be accepted that no reliable tradition existed about this. This is not surprising, since the Iranians of old had clearly little interest in history, and no means of establishing an absolute chronology for any events. Once again, therefore, one is left with such evidence as the Avesta itself provides. Linguistically the Gāthās appear very old, comparable indeed in antiquity with the Rigveda, whose compilation, it is thought, may have begun somewhat around 1700 B.C. The world-picture which underlies Zoroaster’s theology is correspondingly archaic; and his imagery, as we have seen, is drawn from the ancient pastoral tradition of his people, which was gradually modified as they became settled. In the absence of any sound external evidence, therefore, it seems natural to conclude that the prophet lived sometime between, say, 1400 and 1000 B.C., at a time when his people were perhaps still dwelling in northern Central Asia, before moving south in their turn to fix their abode in Khwarezm.

This conclusion, vague though it necessarily is, receives support from the testimony of the “Younger” Avesta, of which even the oldest parts appear linguistically considerably later than the Gāthās. This contains only one doubtful allusion to a place in Western Iran. Otherwise it belongs wholly to the north-east and east. It is not at all homogeneous, and many generations evidently contributed to its composition, during whose lives the language steadily evolved from its ancient “Gothic” stage. One of the oldest texts, the Farvardin Yāst, contains references to Iranian peoples whose names are wholly unknown from the records of the Greeks and Achaemenians, which provide some knowledge of Eastern Iran from the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. There are also allusions in this Yāst to place-names which are similarly lost to history. Another text (later both linguistically and evidently in content), namely the first chapter of the Vendidād, contains a list of seventeen other regional names, most of which can be identified with known areas in North-eastern and Eastern Iran.

None of these names occurs in the Farvardin Yāst, and the two texts seem in this respect to span a long period, during which the faith with its scriptures evolved among the Eastern Iranian peoples before finding a hearing among their cousins to the west. Had it been otherwise, and had Zoroastrianism been carried in its infancy to the Medes and Persians, these imperial peoples must inevitably have found mention in its religious works. It seems likely that Zoroaster’s teachings reached the Medes as early as the 7th century B.C., together with a canon of religious works already so venerable that no obvious western imprint was ever thereafter made on them, even when further material came to be added. The prophet himself must therefore have flourished centuries earlier, and this accords with the fact that the Greeks in the 6th century learnt of him from the Persians as a figure belonging to immense, remote antiquity.

Assigning Zoroaster’s life to a period in distant prehistory helps to explain how it is that many details of it have been lost, so that only salient facts—together with the precise bits of information imbedded in the Gāthās—survive in the religious tradition. Virtually nothing is known of the years which he spent in dignity and honour at Vštāspa’s court, but in the end, it is said, he died in venerable age, struck down by an assassin’s hand. The Pahlavi books record that his slayer belonged to the Tūryas, an Iranian people who figure repeatedly in the yāst “;¹ and that he was a karapān, presumably, that is, a priest of the old religion. Even his name is given, as Brādhri or the like (the exact form cannot be determined from the Pahlavi). That in the end a fanatic should have slain the prophet seems wholly credible in the light of the fierce religious controversies and holy wars depicted in the Avesta; and before we press on to glean what can be learnt of the early history of the faith, we must first address ourselves to the major task of elucidating Zoroaster’s own teachings and seeking to discover what was so new and challenging in them that they should have awakened either self-sacrificing devotion or deadly hate, so that Zoroastrianism received, like nascent Christianity and Islam, an early baptism of blood.

46 See below, p. 286 n. 38 and in Vol. II.
47 See above, p. 3.
48 A recent calculation sets the composition of what appears to be an ancient part of the Farvardin Yāst at 200 years at least after the Gāthās, see T. Burrow, J.R.A.S. 1973, 139. See further in Ch. 10.
49 I.e. Ragha, on which see Gershevitich, JNES XXIII, 1964, 36-7, and further in Vol. II.
50 See Ch. 10, below.
51 See above, pp. 104-05, 107.
52 For the relevant texts see Jackson, Zoroaster, Ch. 10 (pp. 124-12); and add Pahl. Riv. Dd. XXXVI.6 (Dhahbar, 141). XLVII.25 (ibid., 141).
CHAPTER EIGHT
AHURA MAZDÀ, ANGRA MAINYU AND THE BOUNTEOUS IMMORTALS

All the indications suggest considerable intellectual activity in the priestly schools of the “Avestan” people before Zoroaster was born; and this activity appears to have led to sober philosophical concepts, by which it was sought to establish a primeval simplicity and unity behind the diversity of physical phenomena. Thus it was postulated that at the beginning of the world there had been only one plant, one animal, one man; and that from these unique prototypes had come the vast variety of present being. There was also, one may reasonably deduce, vigorous discussion in matters of ethics and worship, for controversy about the cults of daeva and ahura is not likely to have originated with Zoroaster. Probably during his years of training as a priest, and his time of wandering thereafter, the prophet studied and disputed with more than one master and pursued more than one course of intellectual and spiritual inquiry. What is certain is that he must also have spent many hours in lonely meditation, before his ponderings led him both to newly formulated doctrines and to the illumination of his vision at the river’s bank, which gave his intellectual conclusions the force of revealed truth, and filled him with the sense of mission necessary for their promulgation.

The core of Zoroaster’s new teachings appears to have been his apprehension of primeval unity in the sphere of the divine also, a counterpart to the primeval unity already held to have existed for physical things. In the beginning, he taught, there was only one good God, only one divine being worthy to be worshipped, a yazata, namely Ahura Mazda, the Lord Wisdom. At first all divine goodness was comprehended within his person, and plurality and diversity came about only because of the existence also of evil divinity—for together with Ahura Mazda in the beginning, and likewise uncreated, was another being who was opposed to him, the Hostile Spirit, Angra Mainyu.1 These two Zoroaster saw with prophetic eye at their original encountering: “Now these two spirits, which are twins, revealed themselves at first in a vision. Their two ways of thinking,

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1 The expression Angra Mainyu occurs once in the Gāthās (Y. 45-2). It is commonly used in the rest of the Avesta in its later dialect form of Angra Mainyu, which yields the familiar Middle Iranian Ahirman.
into two 'twin' Spirits of opposite allegiance'. But however one may refine upon the interpretation, it remains doctrinally utterly alien to the Gāthās and to the whole orthodox Zoroastrian tradition that evil should in any way originate from Ahura Mazda; and Lommel was evidently right to reject the hypothesis as "a misunderstanding arising from a rationalistic, lifeless interpretation of the word (twin)." This term was clearly chosen by the prophet as a metaphor to express the equality in state of the two unrelated beings, and their coevity. By using it he emphasized, with characteristic concentration and force, that (despite their total opposition) they were peers at the moment when they made their fateful choice.

This choice, whereby each of them according to his nature laid hold upon an external principle of good or evil, changed the opposition between them to an active one, which expressed itself in creation and counter-creation, or the making of "life and not-life" as the prophet expressed it. According to the tradition Ahura Mazda's first creative act was to bring into being other lesser benign divinities to aid him, who were likewise worthy of worship, yazata: "Ohrmazd first created the lordship of the yazatas (yazdān khwaddāyāh)". Among them he evoked first of all seven great ones, who in the tradition are especially known as the seven Bounteous Immortals, the Amaša Spontas: "First he created the Bounteous Immortals who (are) the seven origins (bun); and then the rest." There are diverse ways of indicating how Ahura Mazda gave the lesser yazatas their separate existence. In the Gāthās Zoroaster speaks of him as being the "father" of individual Amaša Spontas, and this expression recurs in the Younger Avesta, where he is likewise called their "ruler" and "creator". They are revered also as forms with which he "mingles himself"; and this verb (raidaduxaya-) seems chosen to convey the essential unity of all beneficent divine being. In a Pahlavi text this is expressed instead by a simile, Ohrmazd's creation of the Bounteous Immortals being compared to the lighting of a torch from a torch. Zoroaster's own words show that he conceived the prime instrument in the act of creation to have been manah, thought: "You, O Mazda, created for us in the beginning by your thought material objects and consciences..." (Y. 31.11.) The purpose of this creativity was seen as precise and reasoned; and in general Zoroaster's teachings, though filled with passion and moral purpose, have a firm intellectual basis, being logically derived from his first grand premise. Throughout the history of the faith Zoroastrian theologians insisted accordingly on the vital part which reason had in their beliefs—as was most fitting in the worship of Ahura Mazda, himself the embodiment of all wisdom.

In his Gāthās Zoroaster invokes, as well as Ahura Mazda and the seven Bounteous Immortals, the "other Ahuras" (who can only be Mithra and *Vouruna Apana Napāt). He also refers by name to a number of the lesser yazatas: Šraoša, Āsi, Gavš Tašan, Gavš Urvan, Tusnāmaiti, Išā—beings who win mention in his hymns, it seems, because of their close association with the rituals of sacrifice and worship. It is clearly implied in the prophet's words what is stated in the tradition, that all these beings were part of the creation of Ahura Mazda, brought into being to help him oppose the forces of evil andewing him utter loyalty and obedience. This is the monotheism of Iran, preached by Zoroaster and maintained in the face of all adversity by his followers down to the 19th century A.C. That in the beginning Ahura Mazda alone existed as a being worthy of worship, the solitary yazata, wholly wise, just and good. He is the only uncreated God, and is himself the first cause of all else that is good, whether divine or earthly, sentient or insentient—for after bringing into being his divine helpers he proceeded, through them, to fashion the world and all that is good in it, as a further means of confounding evil and bringing it in the end to nothingness. Zoroaster sees him as the "creator of life", dātar-
Ayhās (Y. 50.11), and his constant epithet throughout Zoroastrian literature and invocation is Dādvah or Dādār, “Creator”. It was he who, according to Zoroaster’s vision, “as primal being thus thought to himself: “Let the blissful places be filled with light”,” 19 he who “established the path of the sun and the stars”, 20 who “set firmly both the earth from below and the sky, (to keep them) from falling”, 21 who “yoked swiftness to the wind and clouds”, 22 who “created both light and darkness ... both sleeping and waking ... by whom (were made) dawn, noon and night”, who was in fact “Creator of all things through (his) Bounteous Spirit” (spānâ mainyâ wispanam dâdar). 23 Since his creation included all beneficent lesser divinities, they, the yazatas of Zoroastrianism, cannot properly be called “gods”, for this word suggests the independent divine beings of a pagan pantheon—and it is a striking fact that the old Iranian term for “god”, baga, is rarely used in the Avesta. 24 On the other hand, the origin of most of the yazatas as pagan divinities, and their position still as beings worthy of worship in their own right, makes them more than the angels with which other monotheists have bridged the gulf between man and the Deity. 25 In general it is probably best, therefore, to leave the Zoroastrian word yazata untranslated, to represent a concept unique to this great faith.

A term used generally in Zoroastrianism to describe Ahura Mazdā and all his creation is spnâta, an adjective which appears to mean “possessing power”, the noun spnâ being “supernatural power”. 26 When applied to the yazatas it meant “having power to aid”, hence “furthering, supporting, benefitting”. Naturally through constant religious use the word acquired overtones of meaning, and various translations have accordingly been proposed, including the word “holy”, which with its own development of meaning from “mighty, strong” to “sacred”, provides what is in some ways an ideal rendering. The commonest usages are, however, “bounteous” or “beneficent”, these terms being preferred in order to avoid confusion with the rather different concepts of Christianity. The adjective spnâta is applied to the whole of the good creation, material and physical, and ancient usage may lie behind this. The fixed use of this attribute with the noun amâsā “undying being, immortal” (Ved. amûta) appears, however, to be a purely Zoroastrian development 27 (although not attested in the Gâlsth themselves, where no collective term occurs).

As well as being used for the seven great yazatas first created by Ahura Mazdā, 28 the expression Amâsā Spnâta is applied generally in the tradition to all the divinities brought into being by him, who were effective and beneficent in contrast to the false gods, the daevas, who, Zoroaster taught, were destructive and hostile to his creation. Presumably before Zoroaster preached, dividing good from evil with the firmest of barriers, the Iranians had prudently invoked “All the Immortals”, *vispe Amâsâ, as their Vedic cousins continued to invoke the Vîvish Amrâtas, 29 and so the Zoroastrian expression marked a sharp rejection of pagan usage and doctrine.

The adjective spnâta is frequently used by Zoroaster of Ahura Mazdā himself, 30 as well as its superlative, spnâṭita “most bounteous” (Y. 30.5). The prophet’s attitude to the great Creator was one compounded of awe, devotion and trust. He knew him as a person, for he had seen him not only in his original vision, but also in other subsequent moments of revelation, when he both apprehended the Lord in the here and now, and saw him with prophetic eye in the dark backward and abysm of time: “Then I recognized you as bounteous (spnâta,)- Mazdā Ahura, when I saw you as primal at the birth of life” (Y. 43.5); “Then I recognized you, Mazdâ, in (my) thought as being the beginning and the end ... when I

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19 Y. 31.7.
20 Y. 44.3.
21 Y. 44.4.
22 Ibid.
23 Y. 44.7. On the possible dependence on this verse of II Isaiah 44:5 see Morton Smith, “II Isaiah and the Persians", JAOS LXXIII-IV, 1963, 415-21; D. Winston, History of Religions V, 1966, 180-9. It seems probable that when Zoroaster attributed to Ahura Mazdā the creation of dawn, noon and night he spoke as a poet rather than a theologian, using (as oral poets especially are apt to do) a fixed grouping of words. The Zoroastrian doctrine of creation (see the following chapter) is that the world fashioned by Ahura Mazdā knew no alteration of day and night, but that time stood always at noon until Angra Mainyu attacked, bringing darkness as well as death.
24 For the handful of occurrences see Bartholomae, Air. Wb, 921. In the Mhîr Yadd, which preserves so many archaic usages, Mithra himself is said to be “of greatest insight among the gods” baghaznam ... akhârâwisivam (Y. 10.141); but in the later tradition of Persia he is never referred to as Mihr-bay, but always as Mhîr-yaizad (modern Mihristed). On these usages see further Henning, JRA 1944, 134-5; BSOS XXVIII, 1969, 230. In the Parthian and Middle Persian versions of the Manichaean scriptures it isOrmazd himself who is regularly given the title bag or bay, deriving from baga. This perhaps represents Zoroastrian usage of Western Iran with regard to the supreme god.
26 See Halley, BSOS VII, 1934, 288-92; Nyberg, Rel., 92-5; Schaefer, ZDMG XCIV, 1940, 401 n, 9, 408. Lommel, proceeding from the accepted identification of Av. spn̄ta with

to the yazatas it meant “having power to aid”, hence “furthering, supporting, benefitting”. Naturally through constant religious use the word acquired overtones of meaning, and various translations have accordingly been proposed, including the word “holy”, which with its own development of meaning from “mighty, strong” to “sacred”, provides what is in some ways an ideal rendering. The commonest usages are, however, “bounteous” or “beneficent”, these terms being preferred in order to avoid confusion with the rather different concepts of Christianity. The adjective spnâta is applied to the whole of the good creation, material and physical, and ancient usage may lie behind this. The fixed use of this attribute with the noun amâsā “undying being, immortal” (Ved. amûta) appears, however, to be a purely Zoroastrian development 27 (although not attested in the Gâlsth themselves, where no collective term occurs).

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comprehended you with my eye as the real Creator of order (aša), as Lord among the deeds of life” (Y. 31.8). Yet for all the grandeur of Zoroaster’s new vision, it is recognizably an Ahura of old, the great Lord Wisdom, who thus revealed himself to him as supreme God. Mazdā inhabits, in Paradise, the “sun-beholding dominion (bhāṣṭra)” (Y. 43.16), the “house of song” (Y. 45.8). Here is the “throne of the mightiest Ahura” (Y. 28.3), from which he watches “with flashing eye” over the sins of men (Y. 31.13) and the righteous, the əsavans, can find the paths to his dwelling there (Y. 43.3, cf. 33.5). That these beliefs and expressions have Indo-Iranian roots is shown by the Vdasas, from which one learns that the righteous, the rəavans, will make their way to the sunlit, song-filled kingdom (kṣatras) of Paradise, ruled over for them by the lesser Asura, Varuna. When the Lord Wisdom revealed himself to Zoroaster, it is evident, moreover, from random phrases that the prophet apprehended him, as was only natural, in human form: “This, Mazdā, with the tongue of your mouth tell us for the knowing” (Y. 31.3, cf. 28.11); “by the hand with which you hold those rewards...” (Y. 43.4). The anthropomorphic concept of Ahura Mazdā is stated explicitly in the tradition:31 “It is revealed by a passage of the Avesta that Zoroaster ... spoke to Ohrmazd saying ... ‘your head and hands and feet and hair and face and tongue are visible to me even as are my own, and you have such clothes as men have. Give me your hand, so that I may take hold of your hand’. Ohrmazd said: ‘I am intangible spirit (mēnōg i aγrīfrā); it is not possible to take hold of my hand.’” One of the Avestan epithets which is unique to Ahura Mazdā is huk̄rəə̄təmə “of fairest form”32. This anthropomorphism by no means restricts the grandeur of the supreme Lord, who wears the crystal sky as his garment (Y. 30.5), and it is in many respects close to the anthropomorphic concepts of Jehovah and Allah. To state, however (as is often done), that Zoroaster apprehended the Creator as disembodied, invisible Spirit is to import alien and anachronistic ideas into the Gāthās, and to ignore the evidence of the prophet’s own words.

In the light of Vedic evidence about the asuras it can be safely assumed that even before Zoroaster became his prophet the Lord Mazdā was a moral deity; and in Zoroaster’s teaching the conflict between him and his adversary, Angra Mainyu, was wholly a struggle between the right, aša, and the false, drug. Behind this ethical dualism (which itself had evidently some pagan roots) there lay also, as we have seen, an Indo-Iranian tradition of theistic dualism,33 of an opposition between the gods of the bright sky, with life and happiness in their gift, and the lord of the dark kingdom of the dead beneath the earth.34 For Zoroaster this subterranean realm appeared as hell, a place where sinners went to suffer punishment; and it seems possible, therefore, that it was its ruler, who even in pagan times was regarded as claiming those unworthy of heaven, who suggested to him the concept of the “Hostile Spirit”, so that he saw “Ohrmazd in the height and Ahriman in the depth.”35 In the absence of evidence this must remain conjecture; but such a hypothesis would help to explain why Zoroastrian tradition Angra Mainyu is seen both as actively malignant, a militant foe, and also as a mere shadow, a negation of good; for traditionally existence in the kingdom of the dead was characterised by a lack of substance, by a spectral quality without positive capacities, a nothingness.36 It was this existence which the Vedic Indians considered as truly “death”;37 and such a belief may lend significance to Zoroaster’s statement that “when these two spirits first met, they created both life and not-life” (Y. 30.4), immortality in Paradise and “death” beneath the earth.

In the pagan religion, to judge from the Vdasas, aša was conceived as an impersonal force whose action was for the benefit of the world; but for Zoroaster there existed both the principle aša and Aša who was a divinity, one of the seven Bounteous Immortals of his own great vision. In the Gāthās (as in the partly pagan Yasna Ḥaŋthāī) the principle aša has a dominant role. The righteous man is still described as ašavən, “possessing aša”, and each person is urged to surpass the other in aša (Y. 53.5). The divinity Aša is, moreover, the most often named of the Amāsa Spontas, by the prophet himself and in the Younger Avesta. Zoroaster prays that Ahura Mazdā will show him Aša, and Ahura Mazdā commands him to go to Aša to learn (Y. 43.10-12), for Ahura Mazdā is of the same mind as Aša (Y. 29.7). One thus finds in the Gāthic conception of Aša/aša the same pattern that we have already met in relation to the “abstract” gods of pagan times: aša, “righteousness” or “justice” is a quality which can manifest itself in many ways in daily life; and Aša is a divine being who personifies that quality, and who may be invoked and prayed to for its

32 Y. 1.1, 26.2. See Darmesteter, ZA I, 7 no. 4. Bartholomae, Air, Wb. 1818.
34 Nyberg, JA 1931, 119-25, argued for the identity of the primitive chthonic god with Zurvān; but this suggestion can only be entertained if one regards Zurvān himself as an ancient divinity, which seems unlikely (see further in Vol. II). On the possibility that the ancient King of the underworld may have been Yima see above, pp. 92, 117.
35 Gāthā XXVIII.12 (BTA, 249).
36 For Pahlavi material on the negative aspect of Ahriman and his creation see Sh. Shaked, AcSta Orientantis XXXIII, 1977, 70-4.
37 See above, p. 115.
possession like any other god.\(^{38}\) Being just, which we regard as a property of a man's inner self, was apprehended by Zoroaster "as something which guided him, a power which worked upon him. For us it is subjective, but [in ancient Iran] it appeared as something objective, distinct from and —being immaterial—above a man. And since it was experienced as effective, it was something living, hence a personality".\(^{39}\) Even as a divine being Aša remains neuter, like the common noun. Gender, however, does not always seem of importance in Indo-Iranian concepts of divinity, in which, it has been observed, "the activity of a god, even of an important god, is often more prominent than his person".\(^{40}\) In the case of Aša and one of the other "neuter" Immortals of the Gāthās, Vohu Manah, the personification is emphasised through the description of Ahura Mazda as the "father of Aša" (Y. 44.3; 47.2) and "father of Vohu Manah" (Y. 31.8; 45.4);\(^{41}\) and in the later tradition, where there is loss of grammatical gender, these two and the other "neuter" Gāthic Amāša Spānta, Khšathra, all came to be regarded as masculine divinities.

"In the Gāthās Aša is ... set ... in sharpest opposition to the Drug, 'deceit', denial of the divine order and of all that has holy power in itself'. The Kīvgeda knows a corresponding antithesis between rta and druk, but it is quite different, imprecise and accidental. It cannot be doubted that the whole division of existences according to the dividing line Aša/Drug, by which in the world of men the asāvan, "possessor of Aša", stands over against the draγvant, "he who has the Drug's nature", is Zoroaster's own work and is based on the most personal experiences he has had with both deities and men. Zoroaster stands in a battle of life and death. His opponents in the fight, daēvas-worshippers, deny him and his God, and he brands them as Drug 'deceit'. He himself has seen into Aša's order, and he proclaims it for him who will hear. But he who has heard must choose whether he will fight with thought, word and deed on Aša's side for the life-strengthening powers, or will follow the Drug".\(^{42}\) In Zoroaster's teaching Ahura Mazda created Aša,\(^{43}\) and presumably the Hostile Spirit is similarly held to have brought forth the Drug. Yet in Y. 51.10 Zoroaster refers to the "creation of the Drug" (dāmi- drūjō), apparently in antithesis to the "world of Aša" (asāhyā gaēḏā, Y. 31.1); and there are traces in his thought of what seems to have been the pagan concept of aša and drug existing independently of the gods, rather than being evoked by them; for the fact that Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu chose between good and evil suggests that these principles pre-existed them. The question of the origin of evil is not, however, one to which any philosopher of antiquity furnished a wholly satisfying answer; and as a prophet and moralist Zoroaster was presumably more concerned with the practical consequence of what he had apprehended than with pursuing this problem with full intellectual rigour.

The wickedness of the false gods, the daēvas, like that of Angra Mainyu, also appears from one passage to be attributed to wrong choice; for in Y. 30.6 it is said: "The daēvas chose not rightly, because blindness came upon them as they consulted, so that they chose the worst purpose. Then together they betook themselves to Wrath (Ašma), through whom they sickened the life of men." In another verse, however, Y. 32.3, the daēvas are said to be "of the race (ēthra) of evil purpose", which suggests that Zoroaster thought of them also as being "begotten" or created by Angra Mainyu, as the Bounteous Immortals were "begotten" or created by Ahura Mazda. (That Ahriman "miscalculated" the dēvō is explicitly stated in the tradition.)\(^{44}\) Zoroaster nowhere names any of the daēvas, and it is only from the Pahlavi books that one learns that there were numbered among them great Indar, Nāŋhāitbya and Sāvol (Vedic Indra, Nāsātaya and Ģārva).\(^{45}\) The prophet's stern indictment that their intent was evil and that they consorted with Wrath accords with Vedic descriptions of the swashbuckling, amoral Indra, and suggests that Zoroaster damned these gods as false, not to be worshipped, because in his eyes they stood for might instead of right, and lured their worshippers (perhaps through their greed for offerings) into destructive feuding and violence.

Even as Ahura Mazda acted through the yazdās to create and sustain this spōnta world, so, it seems, Angra Mainyu used the daēvas to shape his counter-creation, which the prophet calls "not-life", ayyāti-. This word occurs only in Y. 30.4, in opposition to gaya- "life", and may well have been coined by Zoroaster to express his own concept of the wicked creation. He is not more explicit; but the tradition tells that this "not-life" embraces all that is evil, morally or physically (from man's point of view), evil being for Zoroaster something which preys, vampire-like, on the spōnta creation, rather than existing independently and self-sustained.

In contrast with the corrupting activities of the daēvas, the task of the

\(^{38}\) Earlier Moulton (EZ, 151) was led by this similarity to point out, conversely, that the concept mitra/mithra was "quite in the Gāthic spirit".

\(^{39}\) Lommel in Zaratushtra, ed. Schlerath, 257 (on the six Bounteous Immortals in general).

\(^{40}\) Gonda, Rel. Indiens 1, 28.

\(^{41}\) See Thieme, Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 405-6.

\(^{42}\) Bar, Ōst og Vist, 134.

\(^{43}\) Y. 31.7, 8, 45-4.

\(^{44}\) GBl. I.49 (BTA, 15).

\(^{45}\) On these three daēvas see above, pp. 53-5, 83.
Bounteous Immortals is to further the "world of aša", so that it does not decay or wither, spoil or become impure. The great seven of Zoroaster's own vision are particularly concerned with this duty, for they are not only the first-created of the yazatas, but remain the closest to Ahura Mazda. Partly because of this closeness, partly because of the occurrence in the Gāthās of corresponding common nouns side by side with the yazatas' names, partly also because of a widespread conviction that Zoroaster preached a continuing rather than an original monotheism, a number of scholars have interpreted the appearance of these beings in the prophet's own hymns as representing no more than the isolation of different aspects of Ahura Mazda, which were first venerated as independent divinities by his followers. That this cannot properly be maintained against the evidence of the Gāthās themselves has, however, been amply demonstrated by B. Geiger. Among the passages which he cited to show that Zoroaster himself worshipped these great beings as divinities are the following:

"You who are the most mighty Ahura Mazda, and Ārmati, and Aša who furthers the world, and Vohu Manah, and Khšathra, hear me, pity me ... [imperative plurals]" (Y. 33.11); "For you shall I harness the swiftest steeds ... that you [pl.] may draw near, O Mazda, Aša, Vohu Manah. May you be ready for my help" (Y. 50.7); "Consider my affairs wherein I am active, O Vohu Manah, my worship, O Mazda ... my words of praise, O Aša. Grant, O Amrātāt and Haurvatāt, your portion with everlastingness" (Y. 33.8); "If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazda (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Ārmati ..." (Y. 31.4); "To you, Ahura, and to Aša, shall we offer sacrifice ..." (Y. 34.3); "You [pl.] shall I worship, praising, O Mazda Ahura, together with Aša and the best Manah, and Khšathra ..." (Y. 50.4). In Y. 51.20 Zoroaster speaks of Aša, Vohu Manah and Ārmati as being of one will with Mazda—a thought that is preserved in the tradition; and he envisages the Paradise for which men should strive as "the good abode of Vohu Manah, Mazda and Aša" (Y. 30.10), "the pasture of Aša and Vohu Manah" (Y. 33.3). That these and other of his utterances mean what they purport to mean, namely, that the prophet himself venerated all these beings as individuals, together with Ahura Mazda, has the unwavering support of the whole Zoroastrian tradition down to the 19th century, as well as that of a minority of Western scholars. With regard to the alternate theory (that to Zoroaster they were merely "aspects" of God) it has been justly said: "The fervour of piety has nothing to do with such ... subtle distinctions, but addresses itself to divine Beings, whose beauty is felt here as fascinating and whose power is recognized as effective." That attributes of a great god, having been isolated, should then be invoked and worshipped as independent divinities was already a characteristic of the pagan Iranian religion, as we have seen strikingly in the case of the lesser Ahura, Mithra: for around him, the Lord Loyalty, are grouped "Justice", "Judging", "Valour" and "Obedience" (Artštāt, Kašnu, Hām.varātī, Sraōşā); and close though these beings are to him, each has his or her own separate life, and all receive worship and offerings to secure their individual favours. Nor are these divinities less "abstract" than those of Zoroaster's own revelation. Reverence for deities who personified "abstractions" appears a dominant feature of Indo-Iranian worship, as does also the linking of such "abstract" personifications with concrete phenomena—Loyalty with fire and sun, Truth with water. The mould in fact was already old in which Zoroaster cast his new doctrines.

The names of the six Bounteous Immortals of his revelation, together with the epithets which became fixed for them in later tradition (for they are not invariably or even regularly attached to them in the Gāthās) are as follows: Vohu Manah "Good Intention" or "Good Thought", Aša Vahistā "Best Righteousness"; Khšathra Vairya "Desirable Dominion" or "Kingdom"; Sāpta Ārmati "Bounteous Devotion" or "Obedience"; and Haurvatāt and Amrātāt, "Wholeness" or "Health" and "Life". As these six have so vital and particular a part in Zoroastrian doctrine, it is necessary that they should be considered in detail, both singly and together. As a group, which was how Zoroaster beheld them in his great vision at the river-bank, the six Amāša Spāntas form a heptad with the Creator or with his Bounteous Spirit, Spānta Mainyu. With the latter they are seven beings who are "of one mind, of one voice, of one act; whose mind is one, whose voice is one, whose act is one, whose father and ruler is one, the Creator, Ahura Mazda. Of them one beholds the soul of the other, thinking upon good thoughts, good words, good deeds ... they who are the creators and fashioners and makers and observers and guardians of the creations of Ahura Mazda" (Y. 19.16-18). The "creations" thus referred to were, as the tradition plainly shows, and as appears incompletely from allusions in the Gāthās themselves, the series of six which, with that of pervading fire, make up this world according to the pagan cosmogony—a heptad.
therefore, each of which was assigned to one of the heptad of the Amaša Spantas, as follows (in order of the creations): the crystal sky, which enclosed the world like a fortress and dominated the earth, belonged to “sun-beholding” Khāṣṭhra; 52 Dominion, who thus (since, as we have seen, crystal was classified as a metal) was lord of metals also. Water, upon which all life and well-being ultimately depends, was assigned to Haurvatāt, “Health”. Earth, lowly, submissive and fecund, belonged to Ārmaiti, Devotion, who thus formed a pair with dominating Khāṣṭhra, lord of the sky. The plants which nourish the animal kingdom were assigned to Amasrātāt “Life”, who because of the association both of the divine concepts and the physical creations was closely linked always with Haurvatāt. Beneficent animals belonged to Vohu Manah; and man, the last of the six creations, was the especial care of Ahura Mazda himself, or (as in Yt. 19) of his Bounteous Spirit. 53 Finally the creation of fire, which runs through all the others, was allotted to Aša, personification of the order that should pervade the world. The association of the seven Immortals with the seven creations is fully set out in the Pahlavi literature, as in the following passage: 54 “In that material world of mine, I, who am Ohrmazd (predis over) the just man, and Vahanma over cattle, and Ardvahest over fire, and Shahrevar over metals, and Spandarmad over earth and virtuous woman, and Hordād over waters and Amurđad over plants. Whoever teaches care for all these seven (creations) does well and satisfies (the divine beings); then his soul will never belong to Ahriman and the dēvēs. When he has cared for them [i.e. the seven creations] then these seven Amahraspands 55 care for him... (It is) my will and it is needful, the care and satisfaction of these seven Amahraspands... Tell it also to mankind, so that they may not sin and become wicked, and so that Paradise, the light of Ohrmazd, may be theirs.”

It is notable that here the order in which the Amaša Spantas are named does not tally with the chronological order of the creations. This is frequently the case in Pahlavi works, and has evidently two causes: one is the relative ethical importance of individual Amaša Spantas, which brings it about that Vohu Manah and Aša, who guard the fifth and seventh creations, stand first in dignity among the Immortals, after Spenta Mainyu or Ahura Mazda himself, and are often named before the rest. The other is that some of the creations form natural pairs, that is, sky and

52 Y. 43.16 (šakr̥ dvarōt khaṣṭhrōt).
53 See the Pahlavi Široša I.1 (Dhahrabār, Zand-i Khwārāh Avestād, ed. 160.5-6, transl. 197): GBd. III.12 (BTA, 30); Šaityā tēyād Ys. XV.5 (ed. Kotwal, 58).
54 Šaf. XV.3-6, 30 (Kotwal, 58, 57).
55 A Middle Iranian form of Av. Amaša Spanta.

earth, water and plants; and so one finds their protectors, Khāṣṭhra and Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amasrātāt, frequently placed together in this way after the first great three. These variations in grouping are one of the factors which have obscured for inquirers the exact correspondence between the seven Amaša Spantas and the seven creations. A further cause for confusion arose (probably already in the Parthian period) when some learned Zoroastrians sought to harmonise their own doctrine of the seven creations with Greek philosophical ideas about the four elements of fire and water, air and earth, thought to make up the world. Thus in those Pahlavi books which are most influenced by Greek learning the Zoroastrian term for “creation” (dahēš) is partly replaced by one adapted to mean “element” (zahag). 56 Syrian Christians regularly accused the Zoroastrians of venerating the “elements”; 57 and thus the fundamental theological doctrine of the creations, based on ancient Iranian scholastic theory, became confused by contamination with alien concepts.

In what is evidently the genuine Zoroastrian tradition each one of the great beings of the prophet’s revelation is represented as “lord” (ratu) of his or her creation (Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amasrātāt are female, Spenta Mainyu is masculine, and the other three, as we have seen, are represented by neuter nouns); and the relationship between divinity and thing is similar to that between, for example, Mithra and the sun. It is not, that is, part of the fundamental concept of the yazata, but is very close—so close that just as the name Mithra (Mihr) can be used for the sun itself, so already in the Gāthās, and all through the tradition, the actual names of the Amaša Spantas can represent their particular creations. 58 Mithra, it appears, became linked with the sun because of its fiery nature; 59 and similarly each of the Amaša Spantas has an especial connection with the creation he or she protects, a connection which in some instances appears natural and immediately apparent, in others is more subtle, needing pondering to be understood by non-Zoroastrians. Two whose link with their creations seems simple and direct are the constantly associated Haurvatāt and Amasrātāt, Lords of the second and fourth creations. One has only to suppose that it is “through the influence of powers hostile to the gods that there arise failure of crops and drought. These in the elemental sphere are the opposites of plants and water. Cattle have no more

56 See Bailey, Zor. Problems, 89.
57 See further in Vol. II.
58 This usage is commonest in the tradition in the cases of Spenta Ārmaiti (earth) and Haurvatāt and Amasrātāt (water and plants). It is attested also for Vohu Manah (cattle) see Vd.10.23-5, Darmesteter, ZA II, 267 n. 55, and for Khāṣṭhra Vairya (metal) see Vd. 9.10.
59 See above, pp. 29, 34-5.
grazing or drink, men lack milk, which is the basis of all nourishment. Then there comes, before wretchedness and spoliation have reached their worst point, the longed-for rain. With the water life is renewed... plants sprout, health and prosperity return. Here there exists an entirely clear causal connection between ... water and plants and the divinities of Life ..., and Health". Furthermore, in the kingdom of God which is to come on earth, which was continually present to Zoroaster’s mind as the goal of human striving, will be found health of the body and life everlasting, presided over by these two Amāša Spantas. "In your kingdom (khšātha-)... those two which are both yours, Health and Life, (shall be) for sustenance" (Y. 34.10,11). The concept of Amāratāt appears of particular significance in this setting, since in pagan idiom "life" used thus meant salvation in Paradise, against "death" or mere existence in the land of shades. One has here, therefore, beliefs which in essence are universally comprehensible, but whose working out is typical of the Indo-Iranian tradition, with the linking of "abstract" and material, this world and the world to come.

With the loss of grammatical gender in Middle Iranian, Haurvatāt and Amāratāt, as Hordad and Amurda, came to be regarded as masculine beings; but their fellow-divinity Spanta Armaiti (Middle Ir. Spandārmad) remained and remains strongly feminine, being linked with Mother Earth, "which bears and endures all". There are a number of characteristically allusive references in the Gāthās to the association of Ārmaiti with the earth: "She has given us a goodly home... For her, through Asa, did Ahura Mazda cause the plants to grow at the birth of the primeval world" (Y. 48.6). She is created "for the care of cattle, if she takes counsel with Vohu Manah" (Y. 47.3) and she is adjured: "Through the labour of husbandry let the ox grow fat for our nourishment" (Y. 48.5). As the earth Armaiti will give up the bones of the dead on the last day (Y. 30.7), and in the present she has an especial care for both husbandry and the husbandman. (In later times the annual festival in her honour was called the "farmers’ festival"). With regard to this association of Ārmaiti and the earth it has been observed: "To practice submissiveness, especially sub-

60 Lommel, Zarathustra, ed. Schirerath, 260. For parallels in Indian thought see Thieme, Studien über die Zend-Wirkworte, 29.
61 Lommel, loc. cit., 261.
62 See A. V. W. Jackson apud Moulton, EZ, 163-4; and cf. Vd, 18.31. This is not incompatible with the rite of exposure of the dead, since the bones of the body are nearly always in the end bursed, see above, p. 110, 113. In the tradition "Spanta Armaiti" is also said to yield up at the resurrection those born from the seed duly entrusted to her after podhis noxturna, see Vd, 18.36-32.
63 For some Tāv. and Pahlavi passages on the link between Spanta Armaiti and earth see Buley, Pahlavische W. Erz., 1967, 133-44.
64 Lommel, loc. cit., 261.

missiveness towards God, is indeed the business of every upright man. In the social gradation, however, it has for millennia been so, that obedience and devotion have been looked for especially from the peasantry, who are the most closely bound to the soil". There is thus excellent reason for seeing in Devotion or Obedience the guardian of earth. Whether such a concept existed before Zoroaster’s time has been much debated. In a late Indian source (Sāyaṇa’s commentary on the Vedas, made in the 14th century A.C.) Skt. Armaiti is identified with the earth; but it has been suggested that this was a parallel development in India, which took place independently of the Iranian tradition. Recently, however, evidence has been adduced from Khotanese Saka (which is held to preserve usages from Iranian paganism), which points to the possible existence of an old link between devotion and the earth. For there existed in Saka two expressions: yasama śiśandai, < zam *śiṣtā "bounteous earth", which was used for "world"; and śiṣṭadāmata, < *śiṣtā aramata "bounteous, devoted", with which, when the Sakas became Buddhists, they rendered the name of Śri, the Indian goddess of Fortune. On the basis of these usages it has been suggested that pāgan Iran may have known a goddess "Bounteous, devoted Earth", who was thus identified through her epithets with the alien Śri; and that her attribute aramata "devoted" may have provided Zoroaster with inspiration for the Bounteous Immortal Ārmaiti, who kept the old association with Mother Earth.

The submissive Ārmaiti is regularly paired with Khšātha, "Dominion" or "Kingdom"; and presumably Zoroaster saw in the crystal sky, strong, hard, and arching protectively over the earth, a fit representative of lordship in its benevolent relation to lowly obedience. The sky, though so noble a symbol, is, however, remote and untouchable, and it is Khšātha’s further association with metals here on earth that brings men into contact with his creation. In the Gāthās the only mention of metal concerns the river of molten metal at the end of the world, and in neither of the two passages concerned is a connection with Khšātha made (although there is probably doctrinal significance in this final purification of earth by the fiery substance of the sky). It is in the tradition that Khšātha’s lordship
is expounded in all its fullness, from his care of the “metallic” sky above\(^8\) to his association with this molten stream,\(^9\) and then further with the warrior’s armour and weapons (belonging fitly to strong Dominion),\(^7\) and with the beneficent ruler’s largesse of gold\(^7\) (which mirrors again the protective role of Khshathra towards Armitai). Although Khshathra’s guardianship of the sky is clearly stated, it is his general protection of metals which is usually spoken of, since it is through this that Zoroaster’s followers can exercise that stewardship of his creation which is one of their religious duties.\(^7\) The sky had its vital part in the Zoroastrian genesis, but it cannot be either served or wronged by man in his daily life. Thus it is said in a late passage in which are set out man’s duties to the seven creations: “Let it be known that no one can take hold of the sky nor can anyone defile it”\(^7\). The sky is the only one of the creations of which this is true; and this explains why Khshathra’s lordship over it (rather than over terrestrial metals) is referred to only in learned cosmogonic works and not in ethical writings, which seek to direct behaviour. Since these cosmogonic treatises survive only in Pahlavi versions which were not adequately published before the present century, this caused Khshathra’s link with the sky to be overlooked until recently by European scholars.\(^7\) As a result the perfect correspondence of the seven Amās Spantas with the seven creations was obscured, and this was yet another factor helping to confuse this central doctrine and to conceal the strong dogmatic framework of Zoroaster’s teachings. The effect of these teachings—the unique sense of responsibility felt by his followers, members of one creation, towards the other six—can, however, be clearly traced from ancient to modern times, and is one of the distinctive characteristics of Zoroastrianism. This has been acknowledged by almost all students of this religion: it is only the theological basis for it which has so long baffled inquiry.\(^7\)

In the Gāthās Zoroaster’s thoughts about khshathra as a thing turn mostly to the “dominion” or “kingdom” of God, which was conceived, it seems, both as heaven itself, thought of as lying just above the visible sky, and as the kingdom of God to come on earth, which is also represented by Khshathra—hence, presumably, his standing epithet of varya “desirable”; for as Christians pray to God, “Thy kingdom come...”, so also Zoroastrians long to establish the kingdom of Ahura Mazda here below.\(^7\) The heavenly aspect of khshathra/Khshathra has plainly a pagan origin, for in the Vedas Paradise is the kṣatra of Varuṇa, the kingdom of heaven which for their own happiness men longed to attain. In this regard khshathra was linked closely with amāvatā, the “life” which might be won in the society of the gods above. The concept of Khshathra, like that of his partner Armitai, is thus rich in implications, in layers of accumulated meaning, both pagan and specifically Zoroastrian.

For a Western inquirer the least readily comprehensible of the links between an immortal and his creation is undoubtedly that between Vohu Manah, Good Intention, and cattle.\(^7\) This is alluded to in several Gāthic passages where, characteristically, Zoroaster names the physical creations and then in parallel constructions the divinities that guard them, as, for instance: “O Mazdā, who... created cattle and waters and plants, give me Haurvatāt and Amamatā... through Vohu Manah” (Y. 51.7). The “cow”

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\(^7\) Before Lommel’s demonstration (Rel., 123 ff.) that the Amās Spantas were already associated with their creations in the Gāthās, it was generally held that the link between divinity and thing was late, part of a postulated corruption of Zoroaster’s teachings. It was F. C. Andreas (see pp. 28, 29) who suggested that the development might have taken place under foreign influence, through knowledge of the 5 Chinese elements: fire, water, earth, gold (metal) and wood (plant). He suggested that Ahura Mazda was first identified as protector of man and Vohu Manah as protector of animals, and that the other five Immortals were then assigned each to one of these Chinese elements. This interpretation was very generally followed; and when it was linked, as commonly, with the idea that the Amās Spantas were merely aspects or organs of Ahura Mazda, rather than divinities, it produced a highly artificial system, with no evident relation to the realities of Zoroastrian faith and worship. For the most recent discussion of this interpretation see Lommel, “Die Elemente im Verhältnis zu den Amas Spantas”, Festschrift A. E. Junius, 1934, 305-77, esp. Zarathustra, ed. Scherl, 377-96.

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\(^8\) The metallic nature of the sky is emphatically stated in Gāthā, III. 76 (BIA, 43), VI 2. 3 (BIA, 71). All Khshathra’s divine helpers are yazatas connected with the sky, see below, p. 267.

\(^9\) See Sinistra 1.4; Śat. XV.18 (ed. Ketwai, 60).

\(^7\) See Gāthā, VI 2. 3.

\(^7\) See Sinistra 1.4.

\(^7\) This is very clearly stated in Śat. XV (cited above, p. 204).

\(^7\) Saalār Bahistakāla 72.1 (ed. Dabhar, 146, transl. Dabhar, Rāṣyāta, 576).

\(^8\) It was W. W. Bailey’s brilliant exposition of asman in Zoro. Problems Ch. IV which made it possible for the double link of Khshathra with the sky and metals to be at last apprehended, as it was by Zaehner, The Teachings of the Magi, London 1956, 32-3. Zaehner did not, however, develop this interpretation in his larger study of Zoroastrianism, Dawn and dekla... where the role of the six Amās Spantas is greatly diminished, perhaps because this scholar was then concerned to interpret Zoroastrianism as a forerunner of Christianity, and was intent therefore on stating what seemed common to the two religions, rather than on distinguishing the particular doctrines of the older faith. On the link between the seven Immortals and the seven creations see subsequently Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 26 ff.
is said by the prophet to have chosen for herself "the cattle-tending herdsman as a just lord, as a promotor of Vohu Manah" (Y. 31.10). Here one enters a world of unfamiliar thought and imagery, behind which lies evidently the ancient dependence of the Indo-Iranians on their cattle. The cow was to them what the sheep was to the Israelites; and those who come to the Gāthās with a Christian background need to transpose the imagery of cattle and herdsman into the more familiar one of sheep and the good shepherd in order to appreciate its religious impact. The Gāthic imagery appears even more complex, however, than the Biblical metaphors. To Zoroaster, as to the Vedic poets, the maternal, mild, beneficent cow represented the "good" animal creation upon which man's life depended; and it was also, it seems, a symbol of goodness suffering in this world from evil—as the cattle of Central Asia suffered from marauders, driven from their green pastures along dusty ways to death. As a symbol of what is beneficent (spontā) and in accord with aša the cow also represents the beneficent and just man, and the herd of cattle the community of the righteous (like the "flock" of Judaeo-Christian tradition). Further, since the same word, gāz, is used in Avestan for both cow and bull, another strand in the complex cattle-imagery derives from the myth of the Primeval Bull, the first sacrifice and source of life. There was also the element of the recurrent sacrifice of bull and cow, man's greatest material offering to the gods. In Y. 29, which is wholly devoted to the "cow" and cow-symbolism, there is a verse (v.7), in which Zoroaster appears to allude both to this sacrifice, which yielded the oblation to fire, and also to milk from the cow, from which libation was made to the waters—the two offerings which sustain the material world. It was not, plainly, in these devout and regular sacrifices, whereby the creature's spirit and flesh were both consecrated for the general good, that "passion and cruelty" against cattle were thought by Zoroaster to show themselves (Y. 29.1), but rather in the laying waste of pastures (Y. 32.9), riotous slaughter (Y. 32.12) and the driving off of herds—actual happenings of his own time and place, which also symbolise the sufferings of goodness everywhere. The individual man's yearning to possess the "luck-bringing cow" (Y. 47.3) or the "cow in calf" (Y. 46.19)—types of healthful increase, of the state of being sponta—is also therefore to be interpreted as his desire to possess goodness, and so become ašavān and enter the kingdom of heaven. Through the development of this image the righteous man in general may be termed a "herdsman" (vāstrya). Thus it is asked: "How, in accordance with Aša, shall he, the herdsman, upright in deeds, obtain the cow..." (Y. 51.5). "How, O Mazdā, is he to secure the luck-bringing cow, he who desires it, provided with pasturage, to be his?" (Y. 50.2). This image admirably symbolises and summarises the Zoroastrian ethic. The actual vāstrya must care for soil and water and plants, for the sake of his animals. He must therefore tend and conserve the good creations of Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amartāt, as well as that of Vohu Manah himself. He cherishes rather than destroys, and needs patience and self-discipline, putting sloth behind him. He also needs courage to guard his charges against wild beasts and cattle-thieves, keeping them safe in their pastures. He is in fact a "good shepherd" expressed in terms of a different culture, and thus furnishes a metaphor for the moral man. The wicked may correspondingly be termed the "non-herders among the herders" (fisvāsī aśvāyanto) (Y. 49.4, cf. 46.4). With such complexity inherent in the cattle-imagery, it is not hard to understand why the cow, although not itself capable of choice but only "good" by nature, should nevertheless have appeared to Zoroaster as the symbol of a motion towards goodness, of the good intent which yearns to enter into the tranquillity of the kingdom of heaven. Thus it was, seemingly, that Vohu Manah appeared to him as lord of the creation of cattle; and so the name of this divinity can actually be used to represent cattle, as that of the other Amesā Spontas can be used to stand for their creations at will.

Nothing is said in the Gāthās to identify the divinity who is lord of the sixth creation, man; and this is perhaps because Zoroaster felt himself, inspired as he was, to be filled as he spoke with this being, the Bounteous Spirit of God, Spontā Mainyu—for the tradition shows that it is Ahura Mazdā who, directly or through his Spirit, is regarded as the protector of man, the only one of the six creations who is capable of exercising that power of choice between good and evil which Ahura Mazdā himself had exercised in the beginning.

The seventh creation, fire, pervading the others, is fittingly in charge of Aša, personification of the principle which orders and regulates the world.
The links between fire and Aša are explicit in the Gāthās. Fire itself has there the significant epithet "strong through aša" (aša.aŋojaŋha, Y. 43.4; cf. 34.4, 47.6); and to venereate Aša offerings are made to the fire. This cultic connection appears as an inheritance from the pagan world, even though the personification of Aša seems Zoroaster's own; for it has been said of the Vedic concept of pta: 38 "Pta is by no means the law of the material world only, but also of... the liturgical world. The order of the cult is in fact an essential part of the universal order, which is maintained as much through this power as through that of the gods... The fire upon the altar, where the flame is kindled every day... is... the womb of pta (RV 10.63.6)". The fire in its container in the pārī or vedi represents the greater fire, the sun, whose rising and setting depends on aša, and which itself regulates the times and seasons of the world. This link is indicated in Yasnā 110:107: "The most beautiful form of things we then devote to you, Mazdā Ahura, these lights here and that highest of the high, that which is called the sun" (Y. 36.6). 83 "These lights here" are evidently the scattered fires of earth. These, moreover, had been linked from Indo-Iranian times with the concept of truth, through the part played by fire in ordeals to test veracity. Zoroaster appears therefore to have been developing richly complex pagan ideas when he termed the good creation "the world of aša" (ašaŋhā gāthā, Y. 31.1). The Aša whom he himself proclaimed as a divinity is invoked more often in the Gāthās even than Vohu Manah, and when these two greatest of the Immortals are named together, it is Aša who most often stands first. 84

Pagan concepts, of aša, of khsathra and armaiti, hauratāti and armotāti, thus appear to have played a part in the conception of five among Zoroaster's great Immortals. Only Spanta Mainyu, the Spirit of God, and Vohu Manah, who led the prophet into God's presence, seem to belong wholly to his new revelation. Spanta Mainyu is by his nature somewhat apart from the rest, as is shown by his virtual absorption in the tradition into the person of Ahura Mazdā himself. In the case of the other six, although Zoroaster evidently conceived them also as yazatas, invoked them, prayed to them and made offerings to them, yet at the same time he had ever in mind, as the Gāthās show, the things or principles which they personified, and on which his meditations were constantly fixed. There is thus continuous juxtaposition in his verses of divinity and thing, and a translator can often only hope to be right when he renders the words concerned as one or the other. The following verses yield examples of such intermingleings: "If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Armaiti... then let me seek by the best purpose (vahīsta-manāh), that mighty dominion (kṣaṭhtra)" (Y. 31.4). "Ahura Mazdā, unifying himself with Vohu Manah, together with Khsathra, with sun possessing Aša, answered them: "We make choice of your bounteous, good devotion (armaitī), it shall be ours" (Y. 32.2): "The man of good will has promised to hold fast to the deeds of this good purpose (vohu-manāh) and to bounteous devotion (spmagiatanmaitī), having known her (i.e. Armaiti) who is the Creator, companion of Aša" (Y. 34.10). 85 The instant passage of thought from quality to divinity is bewildering to those of another time and culture; and what made the matter initially harder for Europeans was that all early translations of the Gāthās were in German, a language which lacks any means of distinguishing in writing between common nouns and proper names (all alike being spelt with initial capital letters). This fact denied the translators any simple means of indicating such transitions of thought, and so encouraged the mistaken assumption that there was uniformity—that one must choose between one or other interpretation, that Aša aša, for instance, must always in the Gāthās be either a principle or a yazata. Much scholarly debate over this matter appears therefore to be wide of the mark.

There is then the further complexity of the link between the divinities and their creations, which requires a constant mental effort if one is to enter the religious world thus presented. In this connection Lommel has wisely observed: 88 "For us... Good Purpose and the tending of cattle are admittedly two wholly different things. But must it always have been so? Could not at a certain epoch abstract and concrete have appeared to the human spirit as of unified being, the abstract as the inner reality of the concrete? So that, for instance, Pious Devotion and the earth were the spiritual and material aspects of the same thing. A division of this kind in general goes very deep in the Avestan concept of the world, and if this touches on "speculation", I do not know why this word so readily attracts the adjectives "learned, priestly, theological" whereby apparently it is intended to characterise a secondary development—secondary in opposition to the way of thought of a creative time or personality. I do not believe that speculation was solely or even predominantly a matter for theologians as distinct from the creative prophets, who were able to unite

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82 Daromeister, Ormazd a. Ahriam, 14.
83 See recently Gershevitch, AHM, 293 (who, however, interprets "these lights here" as daylight rather than are).
84 See Lommel, Rel., 47-8.
85 On žer" of the Creator see Gershevitch, AHM, 168-9.
86 In Zarathustra, ed. Schrath, 31-2.
visionary perception with meditative speculation. Or do we consider something which is strange to us, and therefore appears artificial, as speculation, when it is unsought primary intuition?

To this last question it is naturally impossible to return an answer; but there can be no doubt as to the general proposition that Zoroaster was both a visionary prophet and a meditative thinker. He was also a priest, and, as we have seen, the Gāthās show that he continued to pursue this calling while preaching his new message. His verses accordingly are full of allusions to religious rituals and ceremonies, allusions which are occasionally plain, but more often glancing and cryptic, so that they have only slowly been understood. He speaks of addressing Ahura Mazda in prayer with hands outstretched (Y. 28.1), the words flying upward like harnessed steeds to fetch the divine being to his worshipper (Y. 50.7). He refers to gifts (rādā-) and offerings (myāzda-) and to the blood sacrifice with the zāthrā to fire and water. "With the footsteps of Ištâ shall I circumambulate you, O Mazda..." (Y. 50.8), "This mahtra for fat Ahura Mazda, of one will with Aša, has created for cattle, and milk for those that crave nourishment [i.e. the waters], the Bounteous One by his decree" (Y. 29.7). The former, almost universally held conviction among scholars that Zoroaster was passionately opposed to animal sacrifice arose partly, it seems, from a preconception (that such sacrifices could not form part of a lofty ethical faith), partly from a wilful assumption that the blood offering was never made by his followers. In fact the Younger Avesta, the Sasanian inscriptions and the Pahlavi books are all full of allusions to it, and in

87 Thus it was possible for scholars of earlier generations to assume that Zoroaster was not in fact a priest, but a member of one of the other two estates; see, e.g., Moulton, E.E., 116-8; Hirtel, Die Zeit Zoroasters, Leipzig 1924, 31 (challenged by Lommel, see Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 33 E). The chief work on the priestly terms in the Gāthās has been done by H. Hambach (see his Die Gāthās, passim, with bibliography of his separate articles ibid., I, 107; M. Mold (see his Cults, passim, and references to his earlier articles, ibid., XXXVIII), and F. Thieme (ZDMG 107, 1957, 67-104). A summary of their findings is given by N. Rudolph in a survey-article, "Zarathustra—Priester und Prophet", Numen VII, 1961, 81-116, repr. in Zarathustra, ed. Schlerath, 270-313. With regard to the ritual all these scholars adopted the common Western premise that the blood sacrifice was alien to Zoroastrianism at every epoch.

88 Goddess of the sacrifice, see Hambach, IF LXIII, 1957, 273-8 and above, p. 164.


90 The significance of this weight of testimony was coming to be acknowledged by Western scholars in the 1960's, see E. Zaehner, Damav, 1961, 84-7; Duchesne-Guillaume, La religion, 1962, 99-102. The facts of animal sacrifice in Zoroastrian rituals had been clearly stated by Parsi scholars long before this, see S. J. Bulsara, Abj-māzda and Narmashir, Bombay 1915 (where the relevant passages are given in the detailed index under sacrifice); B. N. Dhabhar, Dieya, 261 n. 15; J. C. Tavada, JBBRAS 1945, 41. They were also recorded by those European scholars who had contact with the Parsis in the 18th and 19th centuries, namely Anguel of Pernos, Hang and Darmesteter, and by chance travellers in the 17th century.

the "orthodox" Sasanian period willingness on the part of converts to partake of the meat of sacrifice was regarded as proof of their sincerity. The rite was moreover regularly and frequently performed by both branches of the living community down to the last century. But the Parsis had to abandon the greatest of the traditional sacrifices, that of the cow, when they settled in India; and as the centuries passed they came to regard this particular blood offering with as much repugnance as the cow itself. When they established influence over their Irani brethren in the mid-19th century they persuaded them accordingly also to abandon it. But they made no objection then to the Irani continuing to offer up sheep, goats and fowls, as many Parsis still did themselves at that time. Latterly, however, in the early decades of the present century, the Parsis wholly abandoned the blood sacrifice, and many members of their community came to reject the practice with a vehemence which foreign scholars have transposed into the distant past, reading into every Zoroastrian reference to cruelty to the cow a condemnation of this rite. This is, however, wholly anachronistic. The ancient Iranians, exposed as they were to the bitterly cold winters of the Asian steppe, were meat-eaters, living evidently largely off their herds, as other nomads were to do after them. In Avestan the standard word for food is phiu "meat", whereas in later Iranian languages of the settled period this was replaced by yān or its equivalents, that is, "bread". That the prophet himself did not question the older practice is shown by his adjuration to Spenta Armaiti, already cited: "through the labour of husbandry let the ox grow fat for our nourishment" (Y. 48.5). The Vedic Indians too were flesh-eaters; and still today, despite the general Hindu dislike of taking life, the Brahmins in their highest ritual, the yajña, both offer and partake of the blood sacrifice. Until modern times this was the observance in the Zoroastrian yasna also; for the old custom held good in both faiths, that the best of what man himself ate he should offer to the divine beings, his guests, and partake of in communion with them in the act of worship. There was also the belief, as we have seen, that since man must take life in order to live
himself, he should temper the wrong of destroying another creature's physical existence by devoting its spirit, through consecration, to the divine beings, so that it at least might live on. The blood sacrifice was thus a disciplined act, reverently performed according to established rites with decent care for the beast to be slain, and remote from acts of wanton cruelty. There is no justification for supposing, therefore, against the testimony both of his own words96 and the practice of his followers, that Zoroaster felt called upon to condemn this traditional form of worship, any more than the Buddha after him, or Jesus, or Muhammad.97 Circumstances brought it about that Buddhists, Jews and Christians eventually abandoned the rite, but this was not due to the teachings of their prophets; and Islam maintains it to this day, without its stature as a great ethical faith being on that account impugned. Modern urban man, able to be omnivorous without ever seeing death, tends sometimes to confused thinking on this score.

Since the 19th-century view was that Zoroaster rejected all rituals except a contemplative reverence for fire, Western scholars also held for a time that he condemned the offering up of haoma; but since this is acknowledged to have been the central rite of Zoroastrian observance down the ages, opinion was earlier revised in this respect; for, as has been said, "it seems contrary to the evidence of the history of religions that a cult which had been fervently denounced by the founder of a religion should have been adopted ... by that founder's earliest disciples".98 In this case the assumption of fervent denunciation was based on a Gothic verse, Y. 48.20: "When, O Mazda ... wilt thou smite the filth (mūthra) of this

96 I.e. the references to žāhīth, šāh, and offerings to fire. The only direct evidence for Zoroaster's supposed rejection of the blood sacrifice is that extracted from three highly obscure Gothic verses, Y. 32.8, 12.14, on whose rendering no two scholars wholly agree, and which cannot therefore properly be used for deductions running counter not only to the whole of the later literature and practice, but also to other more bold passages in the Gāthās themselves.

97 The Zoroastrian teaching concerning sacrifice is admirably expressed in a passage in the Slavonic Book of Inocch (ed. A. Vallant, Paris 1942, 16): "He who shepherds badly the soul of cattle is lawless towards his own soul; but he who brings a sacrifice of pure cattle, it is a healing, he heals his own soul. He who causes the death of any beast without following the ritual prescriptions, is this (being) an evil law, lawless towards his own soul." See S. Pines, Numea, Supplement XVIII, 1970, 83-4. In 1964 the writer was present on a number of occasions in Yazd and its villages when blood sacrifice was offered by Zoroastrians with due religious rites, which require all possible care for the animal up to the last instant (for details see Vol. IV); and she also passed the municipal slaughter house of Yazd on a hot summer's day, where flocks of frightened thirsty animals were waiting in the dust outside the building, and there could be no doubt as to which way of meeting its end was kinder to the beast. Even in the slaughter house, however, the Muslim butchers would dedicate each animal to Allah before cutting its throat, as is required by their own religious law.

98 Zamenhof, Dazm, 85. On the pagan haoma cult see above, pp. 157-60.

99 On this word (Yav. māda-) see recently W. O'Phlaherty and R. Gordon Watson. Soma, divine mushroom, 141; J. Brough. BSOS XXXIV, 345-9.

100 See Bartholomaeus, Art. WR, 1869.

101 If, that is, it ever had the meaning in Avestan of škt. wārīta. This interpretation is favoured by Watson (op. cit., 29) because, it seems, the urine of the rato of amanta mūzumara has the same hallucinogenic property as the original mushroom, and is therefore sometimes drunk to produce intoxication in its turn. He suggested, therefore, that it was for this reason that Zoroaster deliberately chose the term mūthra to condemn the mada which Waardenburg, like most earlier scholars, assumed to be haoma. Brough, while accepting the assumption, denied this special significance to mūthra here, see art. cit., 343-8, with Watson's response. Soma and the fly-agaric, 24-8, and further Gershevitch. "An Iranist's view of the Soma controversy", Mémoire de Jean de Manasse, Paris 1974, 29-35. If the mada of Y. 48.10 is not haoma, however, argument and counter-argument are alike irrelevant to it.

102 See above, p. 162 with n. 102.

103 See above, pp. 157-8.
maintenance of the blood sacrifice and haoma cult, together with the other rites of the ancient Ahuric religion. In the Younger Avesta the prophet is shown making his due acts of worship as a priest, “with haoma-, with “corn, with flesh, with harsman-, with skill of tongue ... with offerings (zahhura-), with well-uttered words.”

Like his forefathers, it seems, he devoted his offerings to diverse divine beings, but with one weighty reservation: he venerated only those who were spunta, who belonged to the good creation of Ahura Mazda, and whose worship he knew through revelation to be sanctioned by the Lord. This is expressed in the last verse of one of the Gāhās (Y. 51.22), with reference, it seems, to an act of worship which he had just solemnised in honour of some unnamed divinity: “At whose sacrifice Ahura Mazda knows the best for me according to righteousness (aša-). Those who were and are, those I shall worship by their names and shall approach with praise.”

The phrase “those who were and are” appears to paraphrase the word amēsa “immortal”, and “at whose sacrifice Ahura Mazda knows the best” is a limiting qualification similar to spunta, propitiation of the destructive powers being wholly forbidden.

This restriction appears, however, to have been Zoroaster’s only break with the old tradition of making tangible offerings to the divine beings. Thus he declares: “Then to you, Ahura, and to Aša have we given as offering (myazda-), with veneration, all the material possessions (gāhāki-) in our power” (Y. 54.3). The reference to Aša, lord of fire, together with the use of the word myazda, and the fact that gāhāki in the plural frequently refers to cattle, all suggest that the prophet’s thoughts were turned here to the blood sacrifice, the greatest of man’s gifts to the gods. The question then arises, what for him was the purpose of making such offerings? The answer seems to be that he accepted traditional beliefs in so far as to hold that such acts both pleased and invigorated the spunta divine beings, who, according to his dualistic doctrines, were not wholly powerful, though wholly good, and who therefore needed every source of strength to battle against evil. There is a Gāthic verse said daily by Zoroastrians as part of the prayer to fire, which according to one interpretation runs as follows: “Arise for me, O Ahura! Take strength through devotion, O Holiest Spirit, Mazda! (Take) power through the good offering (āda-), strong might through righteousness, plenitude through good intention” (Y. 33.12). The prophet sees the offerings as a means also of attacking evil directly. “I who sacrifice would keep from you, O Mazda, disobedience and bad intention” (Y. 33.4). Moreover, since both devotion and sacrifice (ārmaiti, išā) are good in themselves, the merit of offering them will accrue to the worshipper’s store of goodness in the hereafter (Y. 49.10), and so help to make the kingdom his at judgment day. Zoroaster’s beliefs about the value of sacrifice thus appear to have had much in common with those of his pagan forbears, who also, it seems, thought of the rite as of threefold merit, benefiting the gods, the corporeal world, and the sacrificer himself. The prophet adapted the old beliefs to his own ethical teachings, however, by enjoining that offerings should be made only with good intention and to spunta beings, so that they might help to bring about the salvation of the good creation and the redemption of the righteous man. That material offerings were not, moreover, enough in themselves he made abundantly clear in another verse which is still spoken daily in the presence of fire: “Then as gift (rādā-) Zoroaster gives to Mazda the life indeed of his own body, the choiceness of his good intents, and those of his acts and thoughts which accord with righteousness, and (his) obedience and dominion” (Y. 33.14). Moreover, the prophet declares that “at the gift of veneration to your fire I shall think of righteousness to the utmost of my power” (Y. 43.9), material and spiritual being thus inextricably intermingled.

These last words provide what seems the clearest indication that we have of how Zoroaster, a priest, reached his complex doctrine of the seven great Aṃsā Spantas and the seven creations: through pondering, that is, on the daily rituals in which he had been trained since childhood, which must, through ceaseless repetition, have been as familiar to him as drawing breath. These rituals, as we have seen, had as one of their main purposes the furthering of the creations of fire and water. The other creations of plants and animals were also consecrated through the service; and probably the pagan Iranian priests, pondering like their Brahman cousins on the significance of religious rites, had already, before Zoroaster preached, brought these daily observances into relation with their theories about the sevenfold formation of the world: thus the sky was held to be

104 Y. 5, 10; for this rendering of *yava see below, p. 266 n. 82.
105 For this translation by W. B. Henning see apud Bose, BSOAS XXXII, 1969, 18. The verse had earlier been translated in a variety of ways, none wholly satisfactory grammatically. On its later adaptation, the yēzhē hātun prayer, see p. 262 below.
106 On the meaning of this word see above, pp. 148-9.
107 For this interpretation see Humbach, Gathas, I 103, II 42. The rendering of Spānātka Mainyu as a vocative addressed to Ahura Mazda rather than as an instrumental is that of Kavasji Kanga (see Tarporewala, The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra, 343).
108 See above, p. 152.
109 This rendering again is essentially Humbach’s (see his Gathas, I 104, II 42-3), who adopts the variant me, reading aśa rather than aḥa.
110 See above, Ch. 6.
represented in the ritual by the metal implements, water by the pure water used in sprinkling and libation, earth by the soil of the pâvî, plants by haoma and pomegranate, the wheaten cakes and stew of grass, animals by the sacrificial beasts, and also by milk, butter and the bull’s hair of the sieve, and man by the celebrating priest himself. The seventh creation, fire, was ever present in its brazier, at all rituals. Thus in celebrating the yasna the priest, himself a member of one of the creations, purified and strengthened the other six which make up the world in which man lives, and upon which his life depends. Zoroaster’s own contribution appears to have been twofold: in meditating on the significance of the ritual for the diverse material creations he reached, it seems, his doctrine of the one supreme Creator, God of gods, who had made them all, and to whom every act of worship should ultimately be directed; and he added a further dimension to the meaning of the ritual itself by seeing in it an ethical purpose also, apprehending in and behind each thing which he as priest handled or looked upon something immaterial, a virtue which was also a divinity, a quality to be desired and striven for in daily life and a yazata to be invoked for help in its pursuit. So through these rituals, performed primarily to benefit the physical world and to honour its Creator, priest and worshippers could also, according to Zoroaster’s new teachings, seek a moral good, which likewise was a benefit to the physical creation of Ahura Mazda, since this, the prophet held, was itself ethical in concept and aim, the work of a Being who was wholly good.

By what processes, intellectual, intuitive, or mystical, Zoroaster reached these doctrines can never be known, or by what stages he evolved them. But whether his belief in the supreme Creator was arrived at first, or whether he reached this through meditating on the lesser Immortals who guarded each creation, in his final system these two doctrines, of the one original God and of the six great divinities whom he first called into being, are indissolubly linked. Through his doctrine of the great Amâ Spantas, themselves personifications of what was spiritual and desirable, and yet at the same time guardians of the physical world in all its solidity, Zoroaster wove together abstract and concrete, spiritual and material, seeing morality in the physical, and apprehending in all beneficent and whole-some things a striving, whether conscious or unconscious, towards the one ultimate goal—the recreation of the harmonious and happy state of being which had existed before Angra Mainyu and his creatures damned the originally perfect world of Ahura Mazda. As a result of his teachings, Zoroastrians have a unique sense of religious duty towards their fellow-creatures and their environment. By caring for the well-being of animals and inflicting as little suffering upon them as is possible in this now imperfect world, by nurturing plants and trees to their fullest growth, by tilling and enriching the soil, by keeping water and fire unpolluted, even by working and cherishing metals so that they are useful, fair and bright, a Zoroastrian both honours the individual Amâ Spanta concerned and contributes his own small part towards keeping the world spanta. At the same time he, as a member of the sixth creation under the especial charge of Ahura Mazda, has the duty to make his own physical and moral being his prime care, in order that he may himself reach full stature. As the crown of creation, he must make a dwelling within himself for all the other Amâ Spantas as well as for Spanta Mainyu, the Spirit of God. It is not enough that he should tend animals carefully; he should also receive into his heart their protector, Vohu Manah, Good Intention. He must embody Kâsha, Doomion, in himself by exercising proper authority: “Every man has authority and a kingdom—the king, the baron, the head of a district or village, the master of a house. The last has authority over sons and men-servants, his wife over daughters and maid-servants. Each can and should in his place exercise right authority.”

Each should also in due season show submission to those above him, and to God, thus making Armaithi his own. By self-discipline, through temperate enjoyment of the good things of this world, a man may also hope to ally himself Haurvatât and Amarâtât, Health and Life; and in all his thoughts, words and actions justice or righteousness should prevail, so that Aša is always with him. When these great seven abide in a man, the forces of evil have no power to invade or control him. This is the essence of Zoroaster’s ethical teaching. Moreover, since Zoroastrianism knows no fugitive and cloistered virtue, it is also the duty of each believer to aid

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111 The association in this way of the six Amâ Spantas with the ritual implements and offerings is still thus understood by Iranian priests and orthodox behâins, see Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 58 n. 20, and further in Vol. IV. Noël approached an understanding of Zoroastrian doctrine on this point, but was handicapped by his assumption that the Gâdhâs represented a co-ordinated liturgy, and by seeing the great Amâ Spanta “less as autonomous divinities than as functions playing a part in the structure of the sacrifice” (an interpretation which seems a half-truth). See his article in Numen VIII, 1961, 58 n. 12.

112 This doctrine is still observed by orthodox Zoroastrians in their own lives, a fact of which the jaddâs becomes perhaps most keenly aware through contact with village communities, where representatives of all the “creations” are encountered naturally in the course of daily life. See further in Vol. IV.

113 This doctrine is expressed in diverse hortatory Pahlavi texts, see, e.g., J. M. Jamasp-Anâ (ed.), Pakâr Texts 1, Bombay 1973, 45-69 = Čidâr Amârâ i Pêdkshân, 577, transl., Zachris, Teachings of the Magi, 24 (for other translations see this Handbuch, IV.2.1, 57 n. 5).

114 Lionel, Zarathustra, ed. Schlarath, 257-8; cf. Y. 37.6.
and cherish other good men in the struggle of life, "for (every) just man is the counterpart of the Lord Ohrmazd". The sense of responsibility towards one's fellow-men is one of the strongest characteristics of Zoroastrianism.

The Immortals are not themselves regarded as passive in this, waiting merely to be made guests of the righteous man. "O Bounteous Armaiti", urges Zoroaster, "instruct men's consciences through āsā" (Y. 33-13). "Armaiti" he declares, "pleads with the spirit in which there is uncertainty" (Y. 31.12). Once a man had chosen rightly, then "to him came Armaiti, with Khsathra, Vohu Manah and Āsā" (Y. 30.7). These beings are actively beneficent, sponsa, caring for the good. Stress has been laid, however, by some scholars on the lack of individual characterisation among them, as if this should mean that they were imperfectly apprehended as yazatas. The truer explanation seems to be that Zoroaster saw them, both in vision and as a matter of doctrine, as a group of peers, equal in power and beauty, and united in the one purpose of furthering the creation of Ahura Mazdā. There was no scope, therefore, for the development of individual mythological traits. Comparing the moral with the amoral, one finds a similar lack of individual traits among the Vedic Maruts, who likewise were regarded as "brothers of equal age, of equal birth, of one mind and one abode". But whereas the Maruts act as a group, the Āmaša Spantas have their distinctive tasks, and thus are distinguished by their functions, although so closely united, and are often separately invoked.

Ahura Mazdā, being wholly good, comprehends in his own being all the qualities which are personified by the six Āmaša Spantas individually, which can also be possessed by Ahura Mazdā's especial creation, the just man. This emerges from various passages of the Gāthās, such as the following: "To them [i.e. just people] Ahura Mazdā, uniting himself with (their?) good intention (vohu-manah-), through (his?) dominion (khsathra-) answered, being well acquainted with (their?) righteousness (āsā-): "Your good beneficent devotion (sponta-armaiti-) we choose for ourselves, it shall be ours" (Y. 32.2). This verse provides yet another illustration of the use of what are also the proper names of the Āmaša Spantas as common nouns—\(\text{with the usual element of doubt, as to whether all of them are being so used (for one could also understand the opening lines as meaning...) Ahura Mazdā, uniting himself with Vohu Manah, through Khsathra, answered, being well acquainted with Asa ...}.\) Such transitions and ambiguities supply another reason why some Western scholars have characterised the Amasā Spantas as "shadowy abstractions". But as we have seen, to the Indo-Iranians the passage of thought from a quality to the god who personified it was not difficult, nor was there anything necessarily "shadowy" about the being thus apprehended. This adjective appears particularly inept when applied to the radiant divinities of Zoroastrianism, whose light obliterated for him his own shadow upon earth. Moreover, ambiguities about quality and yazata appear natural in the Gāthās themselves, which were composed, it seems, in a deliberately subtle, esoteric, priestly convention. In the Zoroastrian tradition (partly founded, one must presume, on plainer and more general expositions of his doctrines addressed by the prophet to the people at large) there is no ambiguity whatsoever concerning the divinity of the Āmaša Spantas, although the double concept of personification and quality naturally persists. As has been justly said: "The whole Zoroastrian system from the beginning to the end, from the Gāthās to the latest Ravayats, postulates the existence of the Amshaspands as a cardinal tenet of faith".

It seems natural that Zoroaster as priest should have been concerned to give his new doctrines expression in observances, so that belief could declare itself through worship and be sustained by it; and there is no reason therefore to doubt the tradition that attributes to the prophet himself the founding of the festivals later known as the gahāmbārs. It appears, however, that his "founding" was in fact a re-dedication of five pagan festivals of the pastoral and farming year, together with a sixth, that of the travaisis, or All Souls. These festivals were left their ancient names, but each was now devoted to one of the six creations, in due order, through the year: sky, water, earth, plants, animals, man. In the existing Zoroastrian liturgy all six festivals are consecrated to Ahura Mazdā as the "high Master" (raites-borzant), supreme over all. The sixth festival of All Souls is, however, especially his, the day upon which man, his particular creation, remembers other men who have lived on earth before him, and above all those "who have conquered for righteousness" (\(\text{yoi aši] sav}-\))

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111 Sfd. XV.8 (Kotwal. 59).
112 Keith, Rel. and phil. I, 151.
113 Jackson, Avesta, Pahlavi and Ancient Persian Studies in honour of P. B. Sanjana, 161.
114 See above, pp. 171-4, 175 with n. 187.
115 See above, pp. 122-4.
116 The common assumption in the West that these festivals were only brought into connection with the six creations in later i.e. Sassanian times is connected with the other assumption, now shown to be untenable, that the link between the Amasā Spantas and creations was not part of Zoroaster's own teachings. The fact that the names of the festivals survive in Evan forms proves nothing about the date at which the festivals themselves were first instituted, since naturally names would change with the changing language (cf. English Easter < OEng. Ėaster, connected with the pagan goddess Easter).
Thus, it seems, Zoroaster absorbed into his ethical religion the powerful pagan cult of the \textit{fravashis}, allowing this great festival for the departed the culminating place still in his own religious year. The six \textit{gahambar} remained of the greatest importance in Zoroastrianism, feasts of obligation which to ignore constituted a sin that "goes to the Bridge", to be answered for at Judgment Day. They have been kept devoutly by rich and poor alike, and are especially times to meet together for worship and joy, to forgive offences and to foster loving kindness among all true believers. Their purpose, to celebrate the six creations, was clearly apprehended, and they alone among the Zoroastrian feasts attracted no myths or semi-secular customs down the years. They continued in fact "Gathic" both in spirit and observance.

There was, however, the doctrine of a seventh pervasive creation, that of fire; and this creation came to be associated with the traditional feast of the spring equinox. It seems very likely that Zoroaster himself gave to this re-dedicated festival the name of "New Day" (Middle Persian Nô Rôz), for he saw it evidently as an annual symbol, through the resurgence of nature, of the final resurrection and dawn of the "new day" of eternal bliss.\textsuperscript{123} For Zoroastrians this is therefore a feast of the resurrection, an equivalent of the Christian Easter (which may owe something indirectly to its inspiration); but it is also consecrated for fire, its dedication is to Rapithwina, the spirit of summer noon, who, personifying blazing heat, is the helper and associate of Aša, lord of fire.\textsuperscript{124} As a festival of one of the creations Nô Rôz, like the six \textit{gahambar}, is a feast of obligation, the only other one in the Zoroastian calendar; and being the last of the seven it was celebrated with sevenfold offerings (as it still is today, even in Muslim Iran)—offerings which were evidently symbols of the seven Amaša Spantas with their seven creations,\textsuperscript{125} whose worship was thereby annually complete, Nô Rôz being at once both the ending and beginning of the devotional year.

Zoroaster's profoundly original concepts of the one Creator and of the six Amaša Spantas grew harmoniously, it seems, out of the pagan Iranian religion and its observances, a noble development due to the religious and moral genius of the prophet himself, but one prepared for by the thoughts and worship of generations of his predecessors. His new teaching had old roots, and there is nothing to suggest that he sought to cut it off from them by breaking generally with inherited beliefs and usages. Thus, despite the statements of generations of Western scholars (which by now have had their influence upon the Parsis), there is not the smallest piece of evidence to suggest that his proclamation of one original Godhead led him to deny the present existence of other \textit{yasalas} lesser created beings according to his revelation, the servants of the Lord, to whom veneration should be duly accorded. Even the abhorred \textit{daehus} were acknowledged by Zoroaster as divinities, powerful to influence men; but their worship alone was rejected by him, on the grounds that they were wicked and sought, in company with the demon Wrath, to trouble and delude mankind.\textsuperscript{126}

Apart from the seven Amaša Spantas, almost all the \textit{yasalas} known to us from the Avesta appear to have been worshipped in pagan times. Each can be shown to aid the good creation in some way, either by furthering the material world, as do the nature gods, or by helping man to live his life on earth happily and well. The term Amaša Spanta can therefore be applied to them generally.\textsuperscript{127} Of these lesser divinities a few only are mentioned in the \textit{Gathas}; for it is plain that Zoroaster's own spiritual life centred on Ahura Mazda and the great six, and that his reverence for the other \textit{yasalas} was inherited and instinctive, and in no way occupied his ardent thoughts. Yet even so the prophet twice speaks of the Lord Wisdom together with his brother Ahuras, in a close \textit{dvandva} compound. The first passage runs: "(May) Mazda (and the other) Ahuras (come) hither, and Aša ..." (Y. 30.9); the second: "If Aša (is) to be invoked, and Mazda (and the other) Ahuras, and Aši and Šrāmiti ..." (Y. 31.4). Despite the wording of these lines, which indicate that Aša and Šrāmiti are not numbered among them, some scholars have sought to identify the Ahuras here with the Amaša Spantas of Zoroaster's own revelation, seeking thus to maintain the theory of the prophet's strict monotheism (the Amaša Spantas being then treated merely as aspects of God). There is no evidence, however, to support this interpretation, for nowhere else is the term ever applied to any of this group of divinities, or to any lesser \textit{yasalas} other than Mithra and *Vouruna Apaš Napât.\textsuperscript{128}

In the second verse just cited the name of Aši occurs as well. We have met this divinity already as a goddess of Fortune, and one epithet used of her by Zoroaster, "great-gifted" \textit{maži,rayi}, (Y. 43.12), richly suggests the pagan concept. But in the ethical \textit{Gathas} the common noun \textit{aši} is used in the sense of reward (for good or ill), rather than for unmerited acquisi-

\textsuperscript{121} Y. 26.6.

\textsuperscript{122} See above, p. 175, and further Ch. 9 and ro below, and Vol. II.


\textsuperscript{124} See Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 338 with n. 101.

\textsuperscript{125} Aši, "Wrath", is the only demon to be named by Zoroaster, apart from Angra Mainyu and the Drug, see above, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{126} See Boyce, BSOAS XXXIII, 1970, 356-7, with n. 87.

\textsuperscript{127} On the three Ahuras of Iranian tradition see above, p. 23 ff.
It has been suggested\(^\text{138}\) that the reason why, of all the lesser beings of the Zoroastrian pantheon, Sraoša and Aši are particularly mentioned in the Gāthās is that they, like the seven great Immortals, have an especial connection with the religious service which seemingly provided the basis for Zoroaster's meditations: Sraoša because he is \textit{tanu.mqthra} "having the sacred word as body", and so is represented by the liturgy itself (in the same way that the great Immortals are represented by the offerings, ritual objects and the celebrant); Aši because the ceremony duly performed requires recompense for the priests, and so she is represented by the \textit{aśādād}, the obligatory gift to them.\(^\text{134}\) In the Younger Avesta Sraoša remains close to the seven Immortals, whereas his "sister" Aši is much less prominent. Perhaps this is partly because she, the giver of rewards, could not dwell in men's hearts as could the god Obedience and the others, and so she remained a little outside the inmost group of ethical divinities, all of whom can be immanent in man. Her concept appears altogether simpler than that of the seven Immortals and Sraoša, for she personifies only recompense (whether tangible, or a sentence of doom or bliss), whereas each of the others personifies a quality, but protects something else through which he may also be represented (be it prayer or cattle etc).

Zoroaster also names in the Gāthās a small group of divinities who appear especially associated with the sacrifice. There is Gāus Tašan, "Creator of the Bull", who in Y. 29.2 is mentioned alone, but who appears with Aša in Y. 46.9, and with Armaiti in Y. 31.9. In Y. 29 Gāus Urvan, the "Soul of the Bull", figures largely, the divinity with whom the spirit of the sacrificial animal is united at death.\(^\text{135}\) In Zoroastrian ritual Gāus Tašan and Gāus Urvan are regularly associated, as in this hymn, particularly in connection with the animal offering.\(^\text{136}\) Zoroaster also speaks of \textit{īzā}/\textit{īzā}, sacrifice and \textit{yazatā} of the sacrifice (Vedic Īdā).\(^\text{137}\) In Y. 49.10 he refers to laying up in heaven the merit of "veneration (\textit{no\-mas}) and devotion (\textit{ārmaitī}) and sacrifice (\textit{īzā})". In Y. 50.8 he offers worship to the Lord: "In the footsteps of \textit{īzā} I shall circumambulate you, O Mazda, with hands outstretched"; and in Y. 57.8 he says: "To him who secures for himself indeed by \textit{īzā} (and) by Aša the good dominion (\textit{bhk\-̊a\-̊}r̊a) ... (to him) comes, for (his) deeds, the best thing [i.e. Paradise], O Mazda". Although the rites of \textit{īzā} are performed to this day by a few orthodox Irani Zoroastrians,\(^\text{138}\) the yazatā is not venerated by name in the

\(^{138}\) See Boyce, \textit{BSOS} XXXIII, 1970, 33.

\(^{139}\) On \textit{aśādād} see above, pp. 169-70.

\(^{135}\) On these two divisions see above, pp. 81-2, 150.


\(^{137}\) See above, p. 164.

Later tradition. Nor is another divinity who is spoken of once by Zoroaster, who says: "The best Tušmāitäi taught me to proclaim: "Let a man not be desirous of pleasing the many wicked" (V. 43.15). This yazatā takes us into the realm of contemplation, for she personifies "Silent Thought", and as such has her fitting place too at the worship of God.139 The personification in this case seems only slight (to judge from her absence from the later scriptures), but it is in harmony with various others to be found in the Yásna Ḥāptahātī.

For all their wide-ranging thought, their ethical and metaphysical content, the Gāthās thus appear closely linked with the ancient rituals of the yazna—not indeed as liturgical texts composed to accompany these rituals step by step, but rather as meditative works based generally upon their celebration. It is for this reason, presumably, that they were preserved by the followers of the prophet as part of the liturgy of this divine service itself. This interpretation helps towards an understanding of the striking mingling of concrete and abstract in the prophet's words, since his thought appears to have been reached through the tangible rites of worship, so that when (for example) he made the sacrificial offering to fire he meditated upon good intention and righteousness, and actually saw in this offering, and in the flames to which he gave it, the divinities Vohu Manah and Asha. This also explains why the names of the Gāthā divinities are used by him so often in the instrumental case. As the priest made the act of worship with the offerings, so man should direct his life with good intention and righteousness, and with the help of the divine beings who personify these qualities. It further aids understanding of why in the Gāthās Ahura Mazda is addressed now in the singular, now in the plural, as if united at times with the lesser Immortals; for he was present at the yazna through his Bounteous Spirit, Spenta Mainyu, and the other divinities were present too, in close collegiality, so that all had their share in this holy act, which was one that brought about "a continual streaming out of divine energy, which with the energy of man protects the world",140 but which also, in Zoroaster's teaching, was an act of self-dedication by the worshippers, through which they offered themselves to God, and sought to bring him and the great Immortals into their own hearts and lives.

139 It is usual, following Geldner (see Bartholomae, A. Wb. 658), to identify Tušmāitäi with Armaiti; but this appears to have been done in the interests of maintaining the theory of Zoroaster's strict monothelism (Armaiti being then treated as an "aspect" only of Ahura Mazda). No adequate reason for it has been advanced. Otherwise Nyberg, Ṛd., 112-3.

140 Lehmann, Der Perser, 221. The "monothelistic" school have interpreted this addressing of Ahura Mazda in the plural as due to his being associated with one or more of the Amesa Spashti as his own "aspects"; but why addressing a divinity in connection with a particular aspect of his own character should lead to his being conceived as two persons is by no means clear.

CHAPTER NINE

THE TWO STATES AND THE THREE TIMES

As far as can be determined, the pagan doctrine with regard to cosmic history had been that first there existed many gods, who variously shaped this world, and peopled it by sacrifice.1 It is also probable that association of the souls of the blessed with the gods in heaven had led to the idea of an immortality of the human spirit stretching backwards in time as well as forwards, as did that of the gods, so that pre-existence was postulated for the individual soul.2 Zoroaster's own doctrines appear to have been as follows:3 at first there existed only the two mighty beings, Ahura Mazda and his great adversary. There followed, after these two had made their choice between good and evil, the creation or evocation by Ahura Mazda of the six great Immortals, and subsequently (either directly or through them) of the other yazatas, and probably also of the souls of men, since no reason appears why the prophet should have abandoned pagan doctrine in this respect. Yásna 29 suggests, moreover, that he adopted the doctrine of the pre-existence of the souls of beneficent animals also, a tenet apparently closely connected with the veneration of the divinity Gōš Urvan. Probably, therefore, one should attribute to Zoroaster himself the full doctrine so well known from the later theological works of his faith, that everything living has had a pre-existence, that Ahura Mazda brought all things into being in an earlier, disembodied state before giving them substantial form within this world. Hence, one may suppose, Zoroaster's own emphasis on corporeal (astral-?) life as distinct from incorporeal. The Pahlavi terms for the two states are mēnōg and gāīg, deriving from Avestan adjectives mainyavaka "of the spirit" and yādāyavaka "corporeal".4 No ethical distinction exists between these two, for both are the

1 See above, pp. 137-40, 141.
2 See above, pp. 121, 127-8.
3 In general on these matters (but with a commentary much concerned with Zarvanism) see H. S. Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes", J.A 1929, 192-210; 1937, 1-134, 233-244. Also E. C. Tedmon, Zurvan; M. Moll, Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien, and "La naissance du monde dans l'Iran préislamique" in La naissance du monde, Sources orientales 1, aux editions du Seuil, Paris 1959, 301-28.
4 See Nyberg, J.A 1931, 31 E.; Ṛd., 20 E. Although the etymology appears clear, and in general the usage is straightforward, there have been many attempts to find satisfactory renderings of these two words other than "spiritual" and "physical", largely because of the ethical contrast so often associated with this pair of words. There are complexities also in Zoroastrian usage, such as the existence of mēnīg gods and gāīg gods, and conflicting
creation of Ahura Mazda, and hence good. Indeed what is remarkable in Zoroaster’s teachings is that he evidently regarded the gēdīg state as better than the mēnōg, since in it the mēnōg creation received the added good of tangible and sentient form. “The transfer to the gēdīg state by no means signifies in itself a fall, but completion and plenitude.” 4 Unlike the mēnōg creation, however, the gēdīg one is open to assault and corruption by Angra Mainyu and his malignant powers; for the purpose of Ahura Mazda in establishing “corporeal life”, astrānt- āstāna-, is actively to oppose evil, to create such conditions that all who are spōnta, gods and men, may struggle in harmony with the spōnta physical world against the external forces of wickedness and make an end of them. This doctrine has been characterised as a “pro-cosmic dualism”, since according to it the material world is good and evil attacks it from outside, whereas in the “anti-cosmic dualism” of such faiths as Manichaean and Orphism the world itself is considered essentially bad, and belongs to the evil powers.6

The Zoroastrian theological works distinguish between unlimited time, that is, eternity, and limited or bounded time, within which the events of cosmic history take place.7 This limited time is divided into two vast periods. The first is that which followed the making of their choices by Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu; during it Ahura Mazda created all things, first in mēnōg and then in gēdīg state, both perfect. This time is accordingly referred to in the Pahlavi books simply as Bundahīšn “Creation”. In the Slavonic Book of Enoch, which apparently derives in part from Zoroastrian sources, it is said: 8 “Before everything was, before all creation came to pass, the Lord established the Aion of Creation. Thereafter he created all His creation, the visible and the invisible.” According to the Zoroastrian tradition, Ahura Mazda achieved the wondrous act of creation while celebrating with the six Amāša Spantas a mēnōg act of worship, a spiritual yasna;9 and this may well be original to Zoroaster’s teachings, considering the deep significance which he evidently attached to this religious office.10

The second period within limited time is called in Pahlavi Gumēšišn or “Mixture”, and it begins with the assault by Angra Mainyu on the gēdīg creation. The pagan concept of the world in its first state was most probably, as we have seen, that it was static and empty except for the one man, one plant, one animal; and that it was brought into movement and growth through a threefold sacrifice by the gods. This doctrine underwent a radical and somewhat awkward change in Zoroaster’s teachings, according to which the original static world was perfect, alteration coming to it not through beneficial sacrifice but through the malicious assault of the Hostile Spirit. The killing of Gayō-marstān and the Uniquely-created Bull,11 and the destruction of the Plant, all spōnta creations, were accordingly evil acts; but out of them the embattled powers of good snatched advantage for their cause by creating from what had perished more men, plants and animals. Thus the old doctrine, that through the sacrifice of life more life was produced, survived, but the motive for the act and the identity of the actors were altered, without this affecting the general doctrine and practice of sacrifice in the present time of Mixture; for once death and destruction had been brought into the world, immortality ceased for gēdīg creatures, and was replaced by the inevitable processes of birth and death. In this state of things devout sacrifice has a spōnta function, furthering the struggle of the good creation—a function which will continue till the last sacrifice takes place at the end of limited time, and immortality becomes again the lot of all God’s creatures.

Another discrepancy exists with regard to the cosmogony which was apparently present already in the pagan doctrines from which Zoroaster proceeded, namely that whereas in its original state the gēdīg world had only a unique representative of the creation of man, the mēnōg world already knew the plurality of fravahās—although apparently only one

3 G.B.III.13 (BTA, 43); cf. PaM. Rts. I. XIV.b (ed. Dhabhar, 47-9).
8 On the importance of the yasna for creating, maintaining and renewing the world see Mokh. Culte, 85-147; and cf. Corbin, art., cit., 160.
11 In G.B.IV.40 (BTA, 51) it is said that, before Ahriman came to the bull, Ohrmazd gave the animal “medicinal māng” (māng i bīzar) “so that its distress would be the less”. It has been argued that this “māng” was not a sleep-inducing narcotic, but a deadly poison (Henning, Zoroaster, 37); but apart from the contrary testimony of other Pahlavi occurrences of the word (see below, p. 280), this interpretation appears impossible on theological grounds. Death is an evil which belongs to Ahriman, and it is he who brings it upon the creatures of Ohrmazd.

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6 See U. Bianchi, Zoroas e i Dharma, Studi e Scritti delle Religioni 1958, Ch. V.
7 See, e.g. Greater Bundahīshn 1.39 (BTA, 13); Discussions on the question of time (zurvan) in Zoroastrianism are complicated, as so frequently in Iranian religion, by the existence of both a common noun and a god personifying what this means. The present writer agrees with those scholars who consider the concept of the yasna Zurvan to have evolved only relatively late—i.e., in the Achaemenian period. In the present chapter accordingly it is only zurvan, time, which is considered, and not the divinity.
Soul of the Bull. Such anomalies could hardly, however, be avoided as different traditions and beliefs were woven together into one system, which in itself was complex and related to past, present and future.

Angra Mainyu's assault is represented as affecting each of the seven creations. First he pierced the crystal sky in order to penetrate the gēōg world; next he sullied water, making it salt, turned parts of earth to desert, and destroyed the plant, animal and man; and coming lastly to fire, he "mingled smoke and darkness in it", thus blighting all the beautiful creation of Ahura Mazda. Then the seven creations rallied their forces and counter-attacked, and so the great struggle of the time of Mixture began. In this struggle Angra Mainyu is himself aided by evil powers of his own begetting, the dāvesas and demons. who do not, it seems, any more than their dread master, themselves possess gēōg forms, but who are often able, by suborning the creatures of Ahura Mazda, to enter into them, so that these become the embodiment of spectral but aggressive evil. Thus the world has become "mixed". This second period, when good and evil contend, stretches away to the end of "limited time", when Ahura Mazda's creation will be restored once more, in gēōg form, to its original perfect state. This glorious moment is termed Frašākarati (Pahlavi Frašagird), the "Making Wonderful". Therewith history ceases and eternity stretches out again unbroken, uneventful; for, wickedness having been destroyed, Ahura Mazda and all spônta gods and men will live for ever in perfect, untroubled goodness, harmony and peace. This eternity to constitute the Third Time, called in the Pahlavi books Wizârim, "Separation", for then goodness will be separated from evil again and forever. In a sense therefore Zoroaster's concept of time is cyclical, with a return in the Third Time to the perfection enjoyed at the end of the First; but it is "the concept of cyclical Time which is not the Time of an eternal return, but the Time of a return to an eternal origin". There is no ceaseless recurrence of events, that is, as in Babylonian cosmicspeculation, but a linear development to a once more changeless state.

There is no trace in Zoroaster's own utterances of any fixed chronology, or of any speculation about the world-age in which Frašākarati will be brought to pass; but in the Gāthās, as in the Christian gospels, there is a sense of urgency, of the end of things being at hand. "An eschatological mood is prevalent ... On earth the horizon is not far off". With this belief in an end to human history Zoroaster appears to have made another profound break with pagan ideas, whereby (to judge from the Veda's) the generations of men were seen as succeeding one another remorselessly like waves of the sea. The strong sense inculcated by Zoroaster of both time and purpose, of all mankind and all spônta being striving towards a common end, a foreseeable goal, has been held by some to be the most remarkable characteristic of his teachings.

The present struggle is a hard one, with each man's wise choice and actions being needed to sway it; but the issue to Zoroaster's mind was plainly not in doubt. Angra Mainyu and his legions are formidable and inflict harm generally, for even the man who is good by choice cannot escape cruelty and suffering at the hands of others, or afflictions such as famine, disease, bereavement and death. Yet in the end, the prophet was convinced, this dreadful power would be broken, defeated by the unity and positive force of the world of good. Zoroaster's radical dualism, of two separate principles from the beginning, thus ends with the destruction of the evil one, so that Ahura Mazda will finally reign supreme, his sway at last undisputed. This is the goal "to which the whole of creation looks forward; it is regarded as being the inevitable consummation of a rational process initiated by God, and it is never supposed for one moment that there is any doubt that it will come to pass. The phrase used for this process is payamandīn ʾê Frašagird, which can be translated as the 'continuous evolution towards the Rehabilitation'". This Rehabilitation or Making Wonderful is "the natural culmination of the fructifying power of the Good Religion; it is the triumph of the positive forces of physical life allied to a positive morality of justice, generosity, and concord, over the bleak negation of physical death and the chaotic forces of injustice, avarice, and discord... The Good Religion can thus be seen as the religion of creative evolution, which culminates in ... the elimination of all that militates against life and happiness,"

Although Zoroaster yearns for this time to come, the Gāthās show nevertheless that his followers are faithful to his teachings when they seek
Meanwhile to enjoy this world, in so far as it is Ahura Mazda's creation. It was in the spirit of the old religion (as exemplified, for example, in Yasna Haptanghāti) that the prophet asked of the Lord the joys of body as well as spirit: "To me who would approach you, O Mazda Ahura, through Vohu Manah, grant the blessings of life, both that of material (existence) and that of the mind" (Y. 28.2). "All your things of the good life, which have been and are and are to be, O Mazda, in your pleasure distribute them" (Y. 33.10). Yet even when he adopts what were probably old formulas for seeking the bounty of pagan gods, Zoroaster adds words which show that for him material possessions could be enjoyed only in association with the moral life, so that he asks for both "the rewards of wealth [and] the life of good intention (rahyā astis yavāhūs gām manahghō)" (Y. 43.1), expecting that the faith revealed to him, which was "the best for beings" (hātām vahistā),\(^{28}\) would cause men doubly to prosper, bringing them "benefit" in both the corporeal and incorporeal states.

The Avestan word for "benefit", sāvah, is from the same verbal root as sāsoyant, a term of great importance in Zoroastrism. In form sāsoyant is a future active participle, with the literal meaning therefore (when used as a substantive) of "he who will bring benefit", "future benefactor". Twice in the Gaethās the word occurs in the singular, and in general it has been interpreted in these passages as being used obliquely by Zoroaster of himself. In Y. 48.9 it alternates in fact with expressions in the first person singular ("When shall I know [these things]... May the Sasoystāt know how his reward shall be").\(^{28}\) Y. 48.11 is an obscure verse for which a number of translations have been proposed;\(^{24}\) but it contains a reference to the "religion of the Sasoystāt" (sāsoyantā... dažnā),\(^{25}\) a phrase which occurs again in Y. 53.2. This expression has generally been understood as meaning Zoroaster's own revelation, but Lommel thought\(^{26}\) that in the latter passage at least the reference was rather to the teaching of a yet greater man whom the prophet expected to come after him to crown his work. Although there might not seem a very strong case for this interpretation of the text considered in isolation, yet it accords with the fact that down the ages Zoroastrians have nurtured a deep and ardent hope of a coming saviour. That this hope was engendered by the prophet himself seems almost certain, when one considers the depth of his faith, and that it must have been plain to him that Fraštōkarati would not be achieved within his own lifetime. There seems indeed a direct reference to this hope in Y. 43.3, which in Lommel's translation runs: "And the man shall come who is better than a good man, who will teach us, for this physical existence and for that of the mind (= "spirit"), the straight paths of salvation ("benefit") to the true (real?) things with which Ahura Mazda dwells—(a man) who is faithful (?) resembles you, O Mazda, who possesses the right knowledge and is wise."\(^{27}\)

From other verses of the Gaethās it appears that Zoroaster also used the word sāsoyant in the plural in a more general sense, for those coming after him who as good men and leaders of the people will help bring about Fraštōkarati. "Then shall they be sāsoyants for the lands who through good intention (vohu manahghā), by actions in accord with righteousness (asa-), prepare the satisfaction of your teaching, O Mazda, for they shall be the appointed opponents of Wrath" (Y. 48.12). "When, Mazda, shall the dawns appear for the world's attaining of asa-, through the powerful doctrines, the wills of the sāsoyants?" (Y. 46.3). He further, it seems, with his sense of the closeness of the gētīg and mēnōg existences, thought of himself and other good men as still being sāsoyants, helpers in the struggle against evil, in the after-life. "May we", he prays, "be those who shall make it, the world, wonderful (fraštē)" (Y. 30.9). Down the generations his followers after him have prayed daily in the yasna: "May we become sāsoyants, may we be victorious, may we be beloved, helpful comrades of Ahura Mazda, as just men, who think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds" (Y. 70.4). "As sāsoyants", they resolve, "we shall destroy the Drug" (Y. 61.3).

A complication in the linear interpretation of cosmic history, as evolving from the mēnōg to the gētīg and then, after corruption, being "made wonderful" again while still in the gētīg state, is that during the present time of Mixture individual souls are continually being forced, by the evil of death, to leave the gētīg and return again for a while to the mēnōg state. As they do so they are judged on what they have done in this life to aid Ahura Mazda's cause, and a temporary place is assigned to them accordingly (for whether he chooses to act well or ill, man is the creature of Ahura Mazda, to whose decree he must submit). This individual judgment anticipates the Last Judgment which all will undergo at Fraštōkarati.\(^{29}\)

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\(^{22}\) Y. 44.10.

\(^{23}\) On this verse see Lommel, Rcl., 228.

\(^{24}\) For references see H. Schleirath, Avesta-Wörterbuch, Vorarbeiten 1, 80.

\(^{25}\) Against attempts to interpret dažnā in other ways in this verse see Gerstein, JAOS LXXIX. 1909, 190.

\(^{26}\) Rcl., 240.

\(^{27}\) Lommel, Rcl., 228-9. The doctrine of the coming Saviour was subsequently developed in connection with the legendary life of the prophet, and will be considered accordingly in Ch. 11, below.

\(^{28}\) For references to the secondary literature concerning the individual judgment see recently Ph. Gignoux, "L'enfer et le paradis d'après les sources pehlav"es", JA 1968, 243 ff.
The pagan Iranians had presumably held, as did the Vedic Indians, that almost immediately after each blessed soul ascended to Paradise it was there re-united with its resurrected body, to live a happy life of full sensation. But for Zoroaster complete happiness could come only with a return to the first condition, with the reunion, that is, of soul with body in a physical world restored to a lawless state. For him it was this earth, the world of the seven Bounteous Immortals, which, made wonderful again, would be the true Kingdom of God. According therefore to his teachings (as they reach us largely through the tradition) the redeemed will live in a mindy state, incorporeal, during the rest of the time of Mixture, to be united with their resurrected bodies only after the Last Judgment, when the earth shall render these up. Later generations of Zoroaster’s followers vexed their minds over this doctrine, for since “imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away”, how could even God reassemble the scattered components of individual bodies, long ages after their dissolution? The theologians’ answer was that to remake is easier than to make, and what God in his wisdom had done once he could do again. In Zoroastrian doctrine the resurrected body is called the “future body” (Pahl. tan i pasen), an expression which may well have evolved to distinguish Zoroaster’s teachings from pagan Iranian beliefs in this respect. The doctrine of a future resurrection was sufficiently striking to be among the “Magian” beliefs recorded by Theopompus in the fourth century B.C., and to be repeated on his authority by other Greek writers.

It is thus in spirit only that each individual receives his or her deserts immediately at death. In his teachings on this matter Zoroaster appears,

characteristically, to have kept the beliefs of his forefathers while re-interpreting these in a way that filled them with moral significance. The old tenet, as we have seen, was apparently that those who had acquired merit in the sight of the gods (largely through keeping prescribed observances, and especially through sacrificing) could hope to ascend to heaven, crossing safely over the “Bridge of the Separator”, the Činvat Pārāt; whereas the undeserving fell from this bridge down into a nether world, to live there as hapless disembodied shades under the rule of the Lord of the dead. Zoroaster taught instead that at the Bridge a strict moral judgment took place, in which favour bought of the gods had no part. Instead each man’s thoughts and words and deeds, accumulated by him since he had reached maturity, were carefully weighed in scales of hair’s breadth precision. If those which were good outweighed the bad, he was saved, whereas if they were lighter he was doomed to the underworld, which for Zoroaster was a hell of torment, the “dwelling place of Worst Purpose (Aēstātum- Manah-)” (Y. 32.13), where the wicked shall endure a “long age of misery, of darkness, ill food and crying of woe” (Y. 31.20). “Bliss shall depart from the right-desiring wicked” (Y. 53.6). As for the man “whose false (things) and what are just balance” (Y. 33.1), who makes his thought (now) better (now) worse” (Y. 48.9), for him Ahura Mazda has appointed “a separate place at the last” (ibid). This is the Misan Gātu, in Pahlavi the Gyag i Hammistagan, the “Place for the Mixed Ones”, which, like the old pagan kingdom of the dead, is an abode of shadows, a place of grey existence lacking both joy and sorrow.

The soul of a dead man departs this earth, in Zoroastrianism as in ancient tradition, at the end of the third day after death, just as dawn begins to show. It is met on its upward journey by a female figure, and if its late possessor has been righteous, āša, in this life, she is young and beautiful, and after the judgment of the scales she leads the soul rejoicing over the Bridge to Paradise; whereas if he has been wicked, drjwast, she is a hideous hag, who clutches it in her horrid arms and plunges it off the Bridge down into hell (the Bridge itself being held to be broad and safe for the virtuous, the width of nine spears, but contracting to the narrowness of a blade-edge for the damned). This female figure comes
thought, that one, by his deeds and words, (makes better or worse) his daēnā; she follows his leanings, wishes and likings". Other passages can be interpreted as referring directly to the same conception, as for instance Y. 51.13: "So the Daēnā of the wicked man shall destroy for herself the assurance of the straight (path); his soul (arvan-) shall suffer... at the Bridge of the Separator because of his deeds and because of having turned aside from the tongue's path of truth (aśa-)." This can be understood as referring to the act of the spirit-hag, shaped by the sinner's deeds, in plunging off the Bridge with his soul, and so losing for both the way to Paradise. On the other hand, it is possible to take daēnā here as a parallel concept to arvan "soul", and to understand the words as meaning that both will passively endure punishment at the Bridge; for, as Humbach has demonstrated,44 the two terms are often used together, and now one, now the other seems the active partner, and now both are passive, or active. Thus the karapans and karis are among those "whom their own soul (urvan-) and daēnā (or Daēnā?) shall torture when they come to the Bridge of the Separator" (Y. 46.11). In Y. 31.11 Zoroaster says that "at first", that is, in the period of Creation, Ahura Mazda made "material objects and daēnās and acts of will"; and sometimes he speaks of the daēnā as a part of a man's own being. "This doctrine do you proclaim to me, to (my) daēnā" he entreats Ahura Mazda (Y. 46.7); and in Y. 49.4 he says that men of ill-will have established the false gods "by the daēnā of the wicked man (dragvant-)". In another passage he declares: "He has been wicked (dragvant-) who was very good to a wicked man, he just (aśa-van-) to whom the just man was a friend, ever since you created the first daēnās, O Ahura" (Y. 46.6). On the basis of such occurrences the word has been defined as meaning "the sum of a man's religious and spiritual characteristics",45 and variously translated as "conscience" or "self". Such renderings do not account, however, for the Daēnā of the Bridge; and it seems possible, therefore, that once again one has here the characteristic Old Iranian development of a thing (in this case a man's conscience, that faculty in him which should see and determine what is proper conduct), and a hypostasis or personification of this, shaped by the actions permitted by it, which Zoroaster identified with the pagan Maiden of the Bridge.46 If this is so, it would seem that there are two pairs of Avestan words, namely daēnā/Daēnā "conscience/Maiden of


39 There are of course exceptions. Thus Nyberg (Rel., 114 fl.) held that there was only one word daēnā, which he rendered as "Schauanin" or "Schauseele"; "Daēnā is at once the 'seeing sense' or 'seeing soul' set in each man, conceived as his religious organ, and the collective unity of all 'seeing ones', thus the fraternity of 'those who see', or the cult community, the religious society" (ibid., 113). Moe thought similarly that there was only one word daēnā, which he interpreted as meaning "religion conceived as the aggregate of rituals whose acceptance decided the posthumous fate of the soul and helped it to triumph at the judgment of the Cinvat Bridge. This daēnā is not individual; but, for each man, she corresponds to the model to which he has conformed during his life, she also represents the community of the dead" (art. cit., 181). He accordingly translated all occurrences of daēnā as "religion", which in places seems decided forced. On the connection sought by a number of scholars between daēnā and Yedic aīna see ibid., 182-5.

40 See Lommel, Rel., 150-7; cf. his Yâhû's, 103.

41 Lommel, Rel., 150 fl., suggested that daēnā was a term coined by Zoroaster to replace frawalī, which does not occur in the Gāthās, and this was refined upon by Corbin, Eranos-Jahrbuch XXI, 1951, 142, who saw the daēnā as the development of "daëstādē"; as the mēnōg counterpart of the gītī frawalī, incorporated in the individual's body. This interpretation barely satisfies, however, the various uses of the word in the Avesta.

42 Hādūhštī Nakh, 11.22-32, see Ans and Haag, The Book of Arda Virāz, Bombay 1872, 284 ff., 311 ff.

43 For this translation see Gerzhevitch, JRAI 1952, 177.

44 Die Gedichte I, 56-8.

45 Bartholomae, Air., W. 666.

46 See differently, but with the same postulated pattern of a hypostasis and a part of the terrestrial being, Corbin, Eranos-Jahrbuch XX, 1951, 158.
the Bridge", and daēnā/DAēNā “religion/the yazdā Religion”. In the
tradition the hypostasis of the first pair is named only once, in the
Hādhūkht Nāsh, being otherwise referred to simply as the Maiden (kuṇig
or duhkht) or Woman (zan), probably by a tradition even older than Zoro-
aster's preaching. One of the inscriptions of the great priest Kirdēr shows
that whatever expression was used, belief in this Daēnā continued to be
a living one in Sasanian times, for he describes seeing in vision what
appears to be his own Woman, leading his likeness by the hand safely
across the Bridge.47 The Sogdians of that period also knew the Maiden
duřydh), “a man’s own action” (ywr yuyydh brydh), and who conducts
him to Paradise.48 In the ancient Yasnā Hāptanahādī (39.2) there occurs
a striking instance of daēnā in what seems to be the sense of “conscience”:
“we worship the souls (urvan-) of the just, wherever born, men and women,
whose better daēnās conquer or shall conquer or have conquered”, and in
the Younger Avesta the word occurs several times either together with
urvan, or with words for other divisions of a man’s inner being, as for
example, Y. 26.4: “we worship the life-force and daēnā- and power of
perception and soul (urvan-) and frauvi-, of the first teachers and the first
hearers... who have conquered for the right”.

There is no evidence as to how the Činvatō Parāštu itself acquired its
name—whether the Separator was originally water, or a chasm, or some
power who waited there for souls to attempt the crossing.49 In the Gāthās
Sraoša is referred to, in association with Asī, as apportioning rewards and
punishments (Y. 43.12),50 but it is not said which divinity indicates “by
the pointings of the hand” (Y. 34.4) the way which the soul is to take after
its trial.51 According to the tradition the judgment is carried out by a
tribunal of three yasatas: Mithra, lord of the covenant, unsurgering in his
existence, presides over it, with Sraoša and Rašnu as his fellow judges. It
is not unusual in Zoroastrianism for a lesser divinity to be named on occasion
rather than a greater one, because he is felt to be more immediately

48 In Gād, XXX.12-13 it is said that the righteous soul, going up to the Bridge, meets first
the likeness of “a fat cow in full milk”, then that of the Maiden, and thirdly the likeness of
a fertile garden. These elaborations derive, it seems, from the Zoroastrian tendency to
triplicate things, combined with a desire to embroider on the delights that await the adorers.
49 See Henning, “Sogdian Tales”, BSOSXL, 1945, 476-7. The passage concerned re-
presents a Manichean version of the Zoroastrian belief.
50 See above, p. 117.
51 See above, p. 226.
52 There is no real ground for assuming (with Moulton, EZ, 150, and other scholars)
that Ahura Mazda himself was the judge at the Bridge. The place of the supreme God, is
so far as any one place can be assigned to him, is high in Paradise itself, and it is entry
into his presence there which is the supreme moment for the blessed soul. (See Hādhūkht
Nāsh II,37, Ass-Haag, ATX, 292[316].

53 On the connection existing also between Rašnu and Asī see Gershevitch, AHM, 194.
54 See above, p. 99.
55 See Humke, Das Gāthās 1, 55-6; Darmesteter, Ormazd et Ahriman, 8-15.
56 For similar Iranian beliefs see above, pp. 170-71.
57 On this verse see above pp. 219, 132.
58 E.g. Y. 31.6.
(

Armaiti-) makes undiminishning dominion (khlaistra- grow” (Y. 28.3).

The Gathic account of the end of the time of Mixture is again a matter of cryptic allusions. The tradition tells of a great battle in which the yazatas, strengthened by their own and by man's many minor victories, will meet the forces of evil in direct combat, with the Bounteous Immortals pitted against daevs and demons, and will utterly defeat them. There appears to be an allusion to this in Y. 44.15, as the time “when the two armies meet”,58 and also perhaps in Y. 48.1, when the prophet speaks of how “as the accountings All shall overcome the Drug”. His references to the last things are more clearly, however, to the final great ordeal by which evil will be purged from the world. This the tradition describes as submersion in a river of molten metal, to be undergone by the whole physical world and by all humanity, both those still living in the flesh and the greater host of the departed, gathered together again in ménig state from heaven and hell. “Then fire and Aryan Yazad will melt the metal in the hills and mountains, and it will be upon this earth like a river. Then they will cause all men to pass through that molten metal ... and for him who is righteous, it will seem as if he is walking through warm milk; and for him who is wicked, it will seem as if he is walking in the flesh (pad gëtig) through molten metal”.59 So Zoroaster says: “What reward you will give to the two parties, O Mazdâ, by your red fire, by the molten metal, give (us) a sign in (our) souls—the bringing of harm for the wicked man, benefit for the just” (Y. 51.9). The initiate, he declares, “the man who knows (vīdevant-)” will refrain from committing sins, “through eagerness (for that) which shall be proclaimed (as) prize ... by the glowing metal” (Y. 32.7); for it is after this ordeal that the final blessing is to be granted to the righteous, of the union of their souls with their resurrected bodies, so that they may enjoy peace and happiness forever on an earth restored to its primal state of good.

In the tradition as recorded in post-Sasanian times this doctrine of the ordeal is given a humane interpretation; for it is said that the fierce torment of the burning metal will finally purge away sin from the wicked, so that all men will then “be made clean” and will enter into the kingdom of God on earth.60 There is little reason to suppose, however, that this was the original doctrine taught by Zoroaster. As Lommel has pointed out,61 an ordeal by molten metal was one which was in fact imposed by the Iranians of old, with liquified metal being poured on the breast of an accused person. If innocent, it was held, he would survive unscathed, if guilty, perish.62 The miracle expected of the divine powers was that they would intervene to save the righteous man, not to rescue the wicked, thereby confounding justice.63 This appears originally to have been the expected outcome of the last ordeal also, that it should finally distinguish between the asanas, who would survive unhurt and rejoicing, and the dragvants, who would perish in the fiery flood. Such is the doctrine presented in the Slavonic Book of Enoch, which is older than the final versions of any of the Pahlavi books, and which seems in this passage to be presenting an almost pure Zoroastrian doctrine:64 “When all the creation that was created by the Lord will come to an end, and every man will go to the Great Judgment of the Lord, then the times will perish, there will not be any more years, or months, or days, the hours will not be counted any more, but the Aion will be one. And all the righteous that will escape the Great Judgment of the Lord will join the great Aion, and at the same time the Aion will join the righteous, and they will be eternal. And there will not be in them any more either labour or suffering, or sadness or the expectation of violence ... Happy are the righteous who will escape the Great Judgment”. Similarly Lactantius, quoting the Oracle of Hystaspes and probably drawing therefrom on an Iranian prophetic tradition of high antiquity, says:65 “Hystaspes ... having described the iniquity of this last time, says that the pious and faithful, being separated from the wicked, will stretch forth their hands to heaven ... and will implore the protection of such [i.e. Ahura Mazdâ]: that Jupiter will look to the earth, and hear the voices of men, and will destroy the wicked”. Ahriman’s own evil legions will, it seems, perish themselves in the last battle. Ahriman and his consort Az, the spirit of Greed, will escape to hell;66 but “the

58 This passage may, however, be taken as referring to the context of the “armies” of good and evil men in the present time, see Lommel, Rel. 222, 227.
59 GED, XXXIV.18-19 (BTa, 285). On the part played by Aryan Yazad, either as friend or healer, see above, pp. 56-7, and further below. In PSh, Rv, Dz, XLI,70 (ed. Dhabhar, 152) it is said to be Shahbuzes who will “melt the metals of all the mountains”.
61 Rel., 210 ff.
62 This is explicitly stated in Sadr. XV. 17, ed. Kotwal, 63 (see above, p. 13).
63 It is noteworthy that in expounding the later teaching in the Dd. Manuscrib is forced to say in the cause of justice that although sinners will thus be finally saved, yet “the renunciation of the souls of the righteous, (on account of) their greater justice and greater virtue, will be a better place and a higher position and more peace and joy” (Dd., Pur. 36.16, ed. Dhabhar, 68).
64 Ed. Vaillant, 62; transl. Fines, art. cit. (above, p. 230 n. 8), 78.
65 DIVINE INSTITUTIONS, VII.18; transl. W. Fletcher, The marks of Lactantius, Edinburgh 1871, 1. 408-9. On the antiquity of the Iranian tradition lying behind the Oracle see Benveniste, “Une apocalypse persélie ... “, REH CVI, 1932, 374-80; and for other works also apparently dependent on it, referring to the final destruction of sinners, see D. Winston, History of Religions V, 1966, 207 n. 54.
66 GED, 34.78, 30 (BTa, 291); ed. Zand-i Vakman Yezd VII.35 (ed. BTa, 67, 124).
molten metal will flow into hell, and that filth and corruption within the earth, where hell has been, will be burnt by that molten metal and become clean. The metallic substance of the sky, Khathra, will thus purify and redeem the beneficent earth, Armaiti, and all will again be purity and joy.

The stern doctrine of utter destruction for evildoers and evil, with salvation only for the good, accords with Zoroaster's noble anger against wickedness, and his passionate longing for a world that was wholly just. Its tolerant interpretation belongs to a more urban and softer age. Yet, as Moulton has wisely remarked, Zoroaster "is not in the least bound to have been rigidly consistent—no eschatological system ever was or could be consistent and logical". Thus the doctrine of the annihilation of sin and sinners leaves in question the fate of the middlingly bad, the dwellers in the Misvan Gâtu; but even apart from such logical difficulties it is perfectly possible that the prophet himself modified some of his less essential teachings during the course of his long life (as other prophets of historical times, among them Mani and Muhammad, are known to have done thereafter).

Since the yasna with its rituals appears crucial to Zoroaster's thought, it is probably again part of his original doctrine that, just as the time of Creation began with the first "spiritual" yasna, so that of Mixture will end with the celebration of the last "spiritual" yasna, which according to the tradition will be solemnised by Ahura Mazda himself or by his deputy (variously designated as Sraosha or the Saoshyant). At this service the last sacrifice will be duly made, that of the bull Hadhayans (even as the Uniquely-created Bull was the first creature to die at the beginning of the time of Mixture). All the righteous will partake of the soma from it and of the paraoma prepared from the mythical "white haoma", and thereby their resurrected bodies will become as immortal as their souls. Presumably it is also through the offerings made to fire and water at this last divine service that the earth, already purged by the molten metal, will regain its original unchanging perfection. In the Zoroastrian religious year this coming state of bliss is prefigured annually in the celebrations of Now Rōz, of which it has been justly said that its purpose is "to return to the point of departure through eliminating the defilement which has accumulated during the past year. Nature is born again, but not only nature: men and their society share in her awakening. Defilement is shed, sins are expiated ... As a result the festival ... necessarily has a double aspect. In relation to the year which has just finished it constitutes a drawing to a close: it is "the end of time". In relation to that which is commencing it is a beginning: the day of creation, of the birth of the world ... The cosmogonic aspect and the eschatological one coexist and cannot be separated". Rapiṭhvina, to whom the festival is immediately dedicated, is, as the divinity of noontide, the lord of ideal time, that of the perfect primeval state, of the completed resurrection, and of Fraiov karat; and each year when he returns to the earth in spring this is a fore-shadowing of the final triumph of good. As Zâdspram says: The making of Fraïegird is like the year, in which at springtimes the trees have been made to blossom. ... Like the resurrection of the dead, new leaves are made to shoot from dry plants and trees, and springtimes are made to blossom. In the present ritual the saotar (sâti) who celebrates the service of thanksgiving at Now Rōz faces west. "For every other communal jaot ceremony the siâ faces east. The reason for the difference is perhaps this, that in facing east the priest honours the rising sun, which represents light springing up to fight against darkness and evil; whereas in the jaot of Rapiṭhvina it is the time of light triumphant which is celebrated, when goodness will be fulfilled and at rest".

The Last Time whose coming is thus annually foreshadowed is one when righteous men will become like the Immortals themselves, of one thought, word and deed, unaging, free from sickness, without corruption or decay. Thus they will experience perfect happiness in the restored world of Ahura Mazda's creation, knowing once more the joys of the senses as well as those of mind and spirit, through the medium of their recovered bodies. (Whether the menog gods themselves will also then take on gétig form is nowhere discussed in the surviving texts.) The wheel will thus come full cycle, from the end of "Creation", when the gétig world was made in its perfection, to the beginning of the Third Time, "Separation", when "limited time" will cease. Meanwhile all the sorrows and strivings of the present period of Mixture are necessary, so that Angra Mainyu may be
destroyed, and evil ended for ever. Zoroaster thus saw a noble purpose for humanity, the dignity of a great aim to be pursued in alliance with God. He also offered men a reasoned explanation for all that they had to endure in this life, seeing this as affliction brought upon them by the Hostile Spirit, and not imputing to the Creator, who was to be worshipped, the sufferings of his creatures here below.

In one respect, however, the earth made wonderful at Frašo-karot will be different from the earth as it was first created, in that no return is prophesied to the original uniqueness of living things. Mountain and valley will give place once more to level plain; but whereas in the beginning there was one plant, one creature, one man, the rich variety and number that have since issued from these will remain for ever.74 Similarly the many divine beings who proceeded from the one God will continue to have their separate existences. There is no suggestion of their re-absorption into the original Godhead, but they will walk for ever with perfect men in the perfect kingdom of God upon earth: "Then Ohrmazd and the Amahra-pands and all yasaads and men will be (together) in one place ... And it will be entirely the creation of Ohrmazd."75

Zoroaster’s eschatological teachings, with the individual judgment, the resurrection of the body, the Last Judgment, and life everlasting, became profoundly familiar, through borrowings, to Jews, Christians and Muslims, and have exerted enormous influence on the lives and thoughts of men in many lands. Yet it was in the framework of his own faith that they attained their fullest logical coherence, for Zoroaster preached both the goodness of the physical world, and the unswerving impartiality of divine justice. According to him, salvation depended upon works alone, and there could be no intervention, whether compassionate or capricious, by an omnipotent Being to alter their consequence. With such doctrines, belief in the Last Judgment had its full awful significance. Yet though these doctrines acquired their ethical depth and logical cohesion in Zoroaster’s revelation, separately they all derived, it seems, from elements in the old Ahuric religion which nurtured him, which was itself a faith of justice and morality, rooted in respect for aša.

74 With regard to animals, however, some theologians evidently held that these “will merge, according to (their) lineage, into the Uniquely-created Bull”; whereas “those kinds of plants which are important, will not decrease, but every place will resemble a garden in spring, in which there are all (kinds of) trees and flowers”. (Pahl. Rev. Bd. XLVIII.103, 107, ed. Dhabhar, 155-6, transl. H. R. Irwin, London thesis, 1940).

75 Ibid., XLVIII.99, 100 (Dhabhar, 157).
CHAPTER TEN

THE UNRECORDED CENTURIES

The early history of Zoroastrianism is wrapped in deep obscurity. Many generations must have lived and died before mention was made in any written record of the lands where Zoroaster taught; and knowledge of the faith's infancy, like knowledge of the prophet's own life, has to be gleaned therefore from meagre indications in the Avesta, amplified a little by the tradition. From these sources we learn that the anger which Zoroaster's own countrymen turned against him when he first preached was felt by neighbouring princes against Vištāspa when he adopted the new doctrines, and that they took to the sword to convince him of error. The battles which followed must have been fought in Zoroaster's own lifetime (if the tradition of his longevity is to be trusted); and the allusions to them in the yāsīs are amplified in the Pahlavi books and the Persian epic. There is also a Pahlavi fragment of epic verse, the Ayādgār i Zarērān, which celebrates the deeds of Zairivari, Vištāspa's brother and captain of his forces in the fighting against Arjasta, chief of the Hyaonas. This prince appears to have been enraged at hearing of Vištāspa's conversion, and according to the tradition he sent messengers to demand that the kavi should abandon "the pure Mazdā-worshipping religion which he had received from Ohrmazd", and become once more "of the same religion" (hamkēš) as himself, since the new faith was a "great hurt and vexation" (grān zyān ud duškhwārih). On Vištāspa's resolute refusal fighting followed, with great slaughter, but victory in the end for Vištāspa. The yāsīs indicate struggles with other Iranian princes who were equally hostile to the new religion, but the survival of Zoroastrianism attests the truth of the claim that Vištāspa set his adopted faith "in the place of honour" among peoples before his dynasty was somehow swept from power—for he himself seems the last of his line to have ruled.

1 See above, p. 138.
3 See Yi.9.30, 5.109. The prince figures in Pahlavi as Arjasp. The Avesta records also the name of his brother, Vandaveralus, Yi. 5.110.
5 Ayādgār i Zarērān §§ 10-11.
6 See above, p. 138.
7 Yi. 13. 100.
Other unknown princes must have protected the young religion after the downfall of the kavis; but the further slight references in the Avesta are to spreading Zoroaster’s teachings not by the sword, but through missionary endeavour. Thus in a part of the yasna liturgy composed in the ancient Gothic dialect the words occur: “We reverence the return of the priests (āhrawan-) who travel afar (to those) who seek Asa in (other) lands” (Y. 42.6). These “other” lands all seem to have been inhabited by Iranians, to judge from the Farnandin Yas, which preserves the names of a number of peoples and places where the faith was early received. In it (vv. 143-4) are praised the fravašis of righteous men and women not only among the Aryas (as the “Avestan” people evidently called themselves), but also among the Tūryas, Sairimas, Sāinus and Dāhīs; and the personal names, like those of the peoples, all seem Iranian in character. The fravašis are also honoured of individuals in the lands of Mūža, Raoždya, Tanyā, Ānhi and Apakahšā. As has been said: “We suffer the torments of Tantalus with regard to these names, whose secret will probably always elude us”. One can only presume that they belonged to regions in the remote north-east, at some distant time in the prehistory of that area. The fact that individuals are named suggests that beyond Vištāspa’s own kingdom the new religion made its way at first only slowly, with the conversion of small groups here and there. Even were the region known at the time it might well, therefore, be difficult to trace the initial spread of Zoroastrianism through it. This is especially so since, although the prophet’s teachings were in certain respects profoundly original, he nevertheless retained large elements of the old religion, including, it seems, the cult and most of the pantheon. For Iranian converts there was, therefore, no sharp and sudden plunge into a new culture, and little variation is accordingly to be expected in personal names, no striking change in outward worship, and small visible alteration in the way of life. These facts make the progress of Zoroastrianism against the pagan religion difficult to determine even in later historical times (as is shown by the controversy which has raged, despite the existence of written records, over whether or not the early Achaemenians had adopted the faith).

It is plain, however, that those who accepted the maga, the message preached by Zoroaster,6 themselves felt this to be a decisive step which separated them effectively from the pagan community. From the Gāthās and the tradition it appears that it was open to any person of good will and understanding to become maga, possessed of this gospel: that the prophet preached to women as well as men, to the poor and untaught as well as the wealthy and learned. “Zarathustra is not the spokesman of any individual class or group. As the one to whom Ahura Mazda has granted insight in God’s design of life, he wants to win his whole ... people for his message, thus leading all of them to salvation, savān, life in its abundant plenitude, as it was in the dawn of creation. When the Zarathustra legend exalts the Prophet as the first priest, the first warrior, and the first herdsman, i.e. the man who united all the functions of the tribe in his person, this is no doubt in good accordance with the central ideas in Zarathustra’s religious teaching”.7 It may well be that in thus offering hope of salvation to every morally good person who accepted his teachings, Zoroaster broke with old aristocratic and priestly tradition, whereby the humblest members of the community were probably consigned, with women and slaves, to an after-life in the kingdom of shadows beneath the earth. If this is so, it gives force to the prophet’s undertaking to bring all those who follow him to Heaven: “Man or woman ... whomever I shall impel to your invocation, with all these shall I cross the Bridge of the Separator” (Y. 46.10).

Such equity is likely in itself to have enraged the proud leaders of pagan society; but what was probably the most difficult point of Zoroaster’s new doctrines for the people at large to accept was his utter rejection of the daeva. He himself acknowledged the power and ubiquity of their wicked company, the daevātā; and he showed therefore the greatest courage, as well as the utmost faith in Ahura Mazda, in defying them and denying them all worship. The same courage and faith was demanded by him of his followers. Before Zoroaster preached, such antagonism as existed between the adherents of ahuras and daevas had probably not prevented the prudent man from offering sacrifices to both; but now if he wished to follow Zoroaster a convert had to cease such practices, and instead of placating divinities as potent as Indra, Nāpāhiathyra or the fierce *Saura, he had to risk drawing their active hostility upon himself by rejecting them in thought, word and act. There were, moreover, evidently considerable groups of men who did not merely seek to avoid the daeva’s anger, but were their convinced and loyal worshippers. In a passage from the life of the prophet preserved in the Dāhīrād it is said that such Da-
vayansians refused to abandon their gods because "When we crave of them lordship and leadership, they grant it us; when we crave richness in herds and wealth, they grant it us." Their faith is castigated in the Pahlavi text as jādāgīth, that is, control of the powers of darkness; and it is said that they did not believe in moral rewards and punishments, which suggests that the Daēva-worshippers had the simple materialistic outlook of the Vedic devotee of Indra, seeking happiness here and hereafter through divine favours accorded him in direct return for his offerings.

The evidence of the Vedas and developments in Iran suggest that some opposition between the ethical Asuras and Indra was felt already in the Indo-Iranian period, and the times of the great migrations probably intensified awareness of this. There must have been different groups then among the invading Iranians, whose divergences seem reflected in the Gāthās: on the one hand tribes who moved steadily with their cattle, and fought only when it was necessary to gain what they wanted, namely good, safe pastures where they could settle and prosper; on the other war-bands, unwilling to abandon strife even after new territories had been won, ruthless, predatory, delighting in combat for its own sake and for thebooty it could bring. Such warriors were doubtless not above carrying off the cattle of fellow-Iranians when no other plunder offered; and they would naturally have worshipped the unscrupulous Indra, varīkē and bountiful, whereas settled peoples were much more likely to have offered their heartfelt prayers to the Ahuras, guardians of order and peace. Indra-worshippers could thus properly be termed "non-herders among the herdsmen", robber-chiefstains and their followers, who preyed upon pastoralists.

Such men would plainly have been hard to turn to the exclusive worship of the ethically demanding Ahura Mazda and his spenta creation; and daēa-worship seems to have survived stubbornly in certain remote parts of Iran down to the Arab conquest. With staunch commitment by such in the community, and natural caution presumably influencing many of the rest, it is small wonder that Zoroastrian missionaries had a hard initial struggle, and that they felt the need to demand repeated abjurations of the daēas from those whom they succeeded in winning over. Such abjuration is accordingly uttered with great vigour in the ancient confession of the faith, in which, as has been pointed out, the term vi. daēa "rejecting the daēas" is a definition of religious belief of equal value with mazdayasna "Mazda-worshipper" and zarathustri "Zoroastrian". This confession, known from its first word as the Paşvātanneer ("I profess"), is still uttered daily in Zoroastrian prayer and worship. Although its language is characterised as pseudo-Gnostic, the text itself gives an impression of high antiquity, with not only citations in it from the Gāthās, but also a significant use of Gnostic imagery; and it seems possible that its kernel is in fact the original avowal made by converts in the early days of the faith, but that, having evolved with the living tradition into a Younger Avestan form, it was later put back, with some errors and inconsistencies, into Gnostic, as more fitting its venerable nature. Some extensions of the original text down the centuries are also very likely. In its existing form it is as follows:

Y. 121.1: "I profess myself a Mazda-worshipper, a Zoroastrian, rejecting the daēas, accepting the Ahuric doctrine; one who prays the Amesa Spantas, who worships the Amesa Spantas. To Ahura Mazda, the good, rich in treasures, I ascribe all things good, 'those which are best indeed' [Y. 47.5]—to the Righteous One, rich, glorious, whose is the Cow, whose is Aša, whose are the lights, 'may whose blessed realms be filled with lights' [Y. 31.7].

2: Bounteous Ārmaiti, the good, I choose for myself, let her be mine! I renounce the theft and carrying off of the Cow, and harm and destruction for Mazda-worshipping homes.

3: To those with authority I shall grant movement at will and lodging at will, those who are upon this earth with (their) cattle. With reverence for Aša, the offerings lifted up, that I avow: henceforth I shall not, in caring either for body or life, bring harm or destruction on Mazda-worshipping homes.

4: I forswear the company of the wicked daēas, the not-good, lawless, evil-working, the most Drug-like of beings, the foulest of beings—the company of daēas and the followers of daēas, of demons (yītilā) and the followers of demons, of those who do harm to

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12. The words with which it now begins, ajāmsi daēa, are a late addition, see K. Hoffmann, Hymn. Mem. Vol., 1967.
13. See Nyl中断, Rel., 274.
14. See above, pp. 211.
any being by thoughts, words, deeds or outward signs. Truly I forswear the company of (all) this as belonging to the Drug, as defiant (of the good).

5: Even as Ahura Mazda taught Zoroaster in each instance, at all deliberations, at all encounters at which Mazda and Zoroaster spoke together.

6: Even as Zoroaster forswore the company of daēvas in each instance, at all deliberations, at all encounters at which Mazda and Zoroaster spoke together, so I forswear, as Mazda-worshipper and Zoroastrian, the company of daēvas, even as Zoroaster forswore it.

7: As (was) the choice of the Waters, the choice of the Plants, the choice of the beneficent Cow, the choice of Ahura Mazda, who created the Cow, who (created) the just Man, as (was) the choice of Zoroaster, the choice of Kavi Vištāpa, the choice of Fravastra and Jāmāspa, the choice of each of the saŋyants, bringing about reality, just—by that choice and by that doctrine am I a Mazda-worshipper.

8: I profess myself a Mazda-worshipper and a Zoroastrian, having pledged myself to and avowed the faith.

I pledge myself to the well-thought thought.
I pledge myself to the well-spoken word.
I pledge myself to the well-performed act.

9: I pledge myself to the Mazda-worshipping religion, which throws off attacks, which causes weapons to be laid down, which upholds khvāštadarātha,24 which is righteous, which of all (faiths) which are and shall be is the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, which is Ahuric, Zoroastrian. To Ahura Mazda I ascribe all good.

This is the profession of the Mazda-worshipping religion”.

This ancient text has been characterised as “the oath which was required of someone being received into the faith”,25 and it is natural that what is stressed in it should be those elements which set the convert apart from unbelievers. The very first demand made upon him is that he should avow his worship of Mazda, and allegiance to his prophet, Zoroaster. Then he must declare his rejection of the daēvas and his acceptance of the Ahuric doctrines in general, and his veneration for all spomta divinities, for those, that is, who are beneficent, as distinct from the evil-working daēvaḍa. Although much of the text is plain, parts have the allusiveness of the Gāthās themselves, and this suggests that converts were taught the basic Gāthā doctrines in all their subtlety, for these words to have had meaning for them. Thus the complex Gāthā imagery concerning the Cow is prominent; and the doctrine of the creations and their guardians is dealt with comprehensively but allusively, as in the Gāthās. Waters and plants, cattle and men, are named in due order in the seventh section; and sky is represented by the “blessed realms” above, which are khšaṭhra’s domain, earth by its Amaša Spanta, Armaiti, the Devotion whom the new worshipper abundantly needs. Fire, too, is represented only by its protective divinity, Aša, and is nowhere explicitly named. Presumably since in its early forms (of veneration for the hearth fire) the fire cult was common to pagan and believer, the Zoroastrian missionaries felt no need to give it special emphasis, even though the prophet had endowed fire with new significance as the symbol of righteousness and general focus for prayer. Just as no fresh commitment was required from the convert over this, so too he was not asked to renounce any former ways of worship, but only to deny those beings to whom worship should not be offered. These facts bear out what can be deduced from the Gāthās themselves, that Zoroaster made few changes in the existing cult, being concerned rather to elevate its intention and to invest established rituals with deeper moral and spiritual significance. (There is nothing to suggest that practices which he repudiated, such as consuming an evil mada,26 were rites connected with any particular group of gods. They may rather have been general abuses, or observances linked with black magic.)

Doctrinally what is perhaps most striking in the Fravardnē is its dualism. Ahura Mazda, together with the Amaša Spantas, is set in opposition to the daēvaḍa; and all goodness (though not all power) is ascribed to the one, all evil to the other. It is understandable that in this text the opposition should be expressed in these terms, rather than as between Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, for (as far as is known) no one had been aware of the Hostile Spirit before Zoroaster preached, so that there was no ancient cult of the Evil One to abandon. It was rather those whom Zoroaster regarded as servants of evil, the venerated daēvas, whom the

23 On ṛṣaśīni see Gershomvitch, AHM, 181 on 273.1; otherwise Nyberg, Rdd., 466 on 273.4.
24 For this translation see Nyberg, Rdd., 466 on 273.5.
25 The Avestan term khvāštadarātha was understood to mean “marriage between kin” by the Zoroastrians themselves down to the 18th century (see Vol. IV), and this meaning permits of a simple etymology: Mazda—”one belonging to, related” and radarātha “marriage” (savn.), see Bartholomae, Att. Ws., 1866. For the well-attested practice, and the literature concerning it, see Vol. II and III. The reference to it is undoubtedly oddly placed in para. 9 of the Fravardnē, which otherwise deals in noble general statements, as the climax to the confessional. The possibility that it is an interpolation cannot therefore be dismissed, though this only raises further problems.
26 See above, pp. 216-17.
convert had to abjure. Although Ahura Mazda's power is perceived as circumscribed by the existence of independent evil, nevertheless he is acknowledged as the Creator, who has made all beneficent creatures and man himself. The sense of cosmic history is moreover strong, for in uttering this profession of faith the convert speaks as one taking his rightful place in a chain of action which began with the waters when the world was formed. "The conversion of the initiate is conceived in true Gothic fashion as a choice of the better and a rejection of the worse... He chooses the better way, as all good and life-furthering powers have done and do since the original creation." Ethically, commitment is to Zoroaster's grand basic teaching of good thoughts, words and acts; and the convert acknowledges his prophet's claim to divine revelation and authority by the repeated references to the "encountering at which Mazda and Zoroaster spoke together", in which "Ahura Mazda taught Zoroaster".

The saosyants mentioned in the past tense are presumably the wise and good, who have brought benefit to the world by following in the footsteps of the prophet; or, if they are the coming Saviours of developed Zoroastrian soteriology, then this must represent an addition to the original text, which seems to have been shaped in the religion's earliest days, when the young community was struggling against hostility and active persecution, with death threatening the faithful and destruction their homes. That Zoroastrians should have suffered, except where they enjoyed royal favour, is no more remarkable than that the early Christians should have been persecuted, for the two faiths had evidently much in common in their missionary endeavours. Like Christianity, Zoroastrianism entered what appears to have been an easy-going, polytheistic society, with a claim to an exclusive revelation vouchsafed to its prophet by one supreme God, and with a demand for total commitment. It exacted courage and devotion; and it offered to all in return the hope of salvation after death, when unbelievers would be damned. Like primitive Christianity, Zoroastrianism evidently engendered a strong sense of brotherhood among the faithful, united as they were by belief and worship and a firm code of prescribed conduct; and such certainty and solidarity were no doubt as exasperating to pagan Iranians as to pagan Romans, and provoked correspondingly harsh measures of repression. What sharpened hostility to Zoroastrians was no doubt a sense of the rashness of their repudiation of the daevas, an act which their pagan fellows may well have felt threatened to bring down the wrath of these gods upon the people indiscriminately; and it was presumably a sense of the dangerous folly and presumption of the new faith which drove Vistâspa's neighbours to try to crush it by force before it could cause general calamity.

What is impossible to gauge is the reaction to Zoroaster's teachings of those who were already devoted to the ahuras, and who, without any great awe of the daevas or eagerness to worship them, may yet have been reluctant to accept a doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of Ahura Mazda. The Vedic evidence suggests that from Indo-Iranian times the Lord Wisdom had been venerated as the greatest of the asuras, solitary and very powerful, exalted over the mighty Mitra and Varuna. Nevertheless it may even so have been a difficult step to take, to acknowledge him as the one uncreated Being, Creator of all yasulas, the ultimate source of all good; and some who turned to the other ahuras for special favour and protection may perhaps have resented this vast claim, and have made common cause with daeva-worshippers and the generality in seeking to suppress the new religion. It is small wonder, then, that its early progress seems to have been difficult and slow.

There can be little doubt that the valiant convert to Zoroastrianism, his profession made, was required to adopt an outward sign of his new allegiance. The "Zoroastrian badge" which down the centuries has distinguished those of the Good Religion from all others is the sacred girdle (called in Avestan yah or aiwiyâhana, in Persian hasti) which every believer puts on in reaching maturity. To wear such a cord as a sign of membership of the religious community was apparently an Indo-Iranian custom for men, for it is observed also by the Brahmans of India. The Brahmans wear their cord over one shoulder: it is knotted initially by a priest, and never thereafter untied by the wearer, who merely slips it aside when this is ritually necessary. Zoroastrian usage is very different, and may well represent changes introduced by the prophet himself to suit his followers apart, and to provide them with recurrent religious exercises (no less strenuous than those later enjoined, partly on the Zoroastrian model, by Muhammad). The Zoroastrian cord is worn as a girdle by men and women alike. It is very long, and is passed three times round the waist, being knotted behind and before with a fourfold knot. Even at

\[\text{Nyberg, Rel., 274-5.}\]

\[\text{Middle Persian hasti. The word is of doubtful origin.}\]

\[\text{That is, formerly, at the age of fifteen, see P. 8, 13-14. This age has tended to be reduced, rather as the age of confirmation has been reduced in a number of Christian communities. For references to the later literature on the subject see Bartholomae, Ar. Wb., 98, and add Modi, CC, 73-9.}\]

\[\text{The Brahman cord is now made of cotton, the Zoroastrian one of lamb's wool, two materials readily obtainable in India and Iran respectively.}\]
initiation the knots are tied by the candidate himself (the priest only guiding his hands), as if to mark that he now takes full responsibility for his own conduct upon himself; and every day thereafter, for the rest of his life, he must untie and retie the cord repeatedly with appropriate prayers, addressed to Ahura Mazda. The symbolism of the kusht (which came to be complex) was evidently elaborated down the centuries, but it is likely that the three coils were these from the beginning, exemplifying the three-fold ethic of Zoroastrianism, and designed therefore to concentrate the wearer’s thoughts on the practice of his faith, as the accompanying prayers express its basic beliefs. The Zoroastrian wears the kusht over an inner shirt of pure white, the sudra, at the throat of which a tiny bag or purse is fashioned, to remind him that he should be continually filling its emptiness with good deeds; but how old this particular custom is there is no means of knowing. It is certainly a striking physical reminder of Zoroaster’s moral demands.

The Zoroastrian prays standing and turned towards fire, as the prophet enjoined—whether the sun on high, or hearth fire, or at night sometimes a lamp. Probably already among the Indo-Iranians three moments of the day had been held significant for religious observances. Thus Zoroaster asks: “Who (is he) by whom (were made) dawn, noon and night, which (are) reminders to the discerning of duty?” (Y. 44.5). These three moments the pagan Iranians presumably regarded as creating the two “periods of the day” (Av. asnya: rauī, Pahlavi gāh), which they called Hāvani and Uzayara, the “time of (haoma) pressing” and the “time of the day’s outgoing”, that is, forenoon and afternoon, each set under the care of one of the two lesser Ahuras, Mithra and Vouruna Apaṃ Naṃ.23 Again it was probably Zoroaster himself, a priest concerned with observance, who created a third period, so that noon ceased to be merely a point between morning and afternoon, and itself became a three-hour rauī. During the auspicious season of summer, when the sprunta powers are in the ascendant, this rauī is dedicated to Rapithwina, the spirit of noon (rapithwā), who is closely associated with Aša, lord of fire, and is himself lord of ideal time (for when the world was created, time stood still at noon); and so he is linked with hope of the end of limited time and the restoration of the ideal state.24 For Zoroastrians summer lasts seven months, from Nō Rōz to the autumn festival of Ayāthrīma, when cattle were driven home to their winter quarters. Thereafter during the five months of winter, the dānīa-dominated season, Rapithwina retreats beneath the earth to cherish with his warmth the roots of plants and springs of water, so that the demons of frost and ice cannot destroy them utterly; and his time of day is then assigned to Mithra’s care, being called, not Rapithwā, but Second Hāvani. There are thus three daylight gāhs throughout the Zoroastrian year, during each of which the faithful are required to say the kusht prayers with invocation of the protective divinity, who for Rapithwina’s gāh is Aša Vahištīta himself. So all through the long summer the thoughts of the devout should be turned at noon to aša and the work of Frašō kvarati, while the withdrawal of Rapithwina in winter is an annual reminder of the menacing power of evil. As for the night, this was probably assigned in paganism entirely to the fravasīs, as a time of dread; and again it is likely to have been Zoroaster himself who divided it into two, leaving the first half to the fravasīs of the righteous, but assigning the second to Sraoša, lord of prayer; and the strenuous practice was required of the faithful of praying twice during the hours of darkness, once in Aiwištirhīrā, from the first glimmer of stars until midnight, and once during Ušah, from midnight until dawn.25

Zoroastrians thus had five daily times of prayer, instead of the three which may be presumed for pagan usage; and to observe them was obligatory, this being an essential part of what in Persian is called one’s bandagī or “service” to God. Priests had in addition to solemnise the high rituals daily; and all members of the community, high and low, priest and lay, had the duty to join together to celebrate, seven times a year, the feasts of obligation, which according to the tradition were instituted by

23 The cord as worn since the earliest records about its nature exist, i.e., since Sasanian times, is woven of 72 threads (symbolising the 72 sections of the later yazna), which are divided into 3 groups of 24 threads (representing the 24 sections of the Visperad); and sub-divided into 6 groups of 12 (the 6 religious duties of the Zoroastrian, and the 12 months of the year), the final knotting together of all these threads representing the brotherhood of man. On these and other points, and for the Pahlavi literature, see Modi, op. cit., 175-6.
24 See Modi, op. cit., 171-3.
25 The ancient Indians made morning, midday and evening sacrifices, the “three hospitalities” offered to the gods (see RV 5.24.4; apud Thielke, Mithra and Anahīman, 78-9). On Uzayara embracing the whole afternoon see Bartholomeas, Air. Wh. 405 sqv.

24 For reference to the later literature on Rapithwina see Boyce, Protošinām, Studies presented to F. B. J. Kipfer, 201-4; and cf. above, pp. 224, 225.
25 On the divisions of the Zoroastrian day, and the divinities guarding them, see, e.g., Y. i. 3 ff., 23 E. et pass., Gلب. III. 22 (BARA, 43); Dh. IX, 9.7, (8.5) ed. Sanjana, XVII, 15; Madan, 793 ff. transl. West, SBE XXXVII, 183-4.
26 For the lasty it was possible nevertheless to have an unbroken night’s rest by saying the prayers of Aiwištirhīrā before going to sleep, and those of Ušah on rising; just before dawn. (The Muslims followed the same practice when they adopted the five daily prayers from Zoroastrism.) The word Ušah simply means “dawns”, but Aiwištirhīrā is of uncertain derivation. In later usage the names of the beings who personify the times of day were used for the gāhs themselves, so that the series came to be (in late Arvestan and Middle Persian respectively) Hāvani/Hāvan; Rapithwīna/Rapithwīn, Uxayārīna/Uxārīn, Aiwištirhīrā/Aiwištirhīrā, Ušahāna/Ušahān.
the prophet. These feasts were all devoted to the Creator, Ahura Mazda, and commemorated his seven acts of creation; and they must have been an admirable means both of fostering the corporate spirit of the community and of bringing home to all its members this fundamental doctrine of the faith. In general the prophet seems to have provided his followers with a strong framework for their devotional lives, to be filled by simple, significant observances through day and month and year; and it was this, clearly, which enabled his teachings to take firm hold among the common people, and to survive, virtually intact, down to modern times, despite external assaults, and periodic attempts by theologians at minor doctrinal compromises.  

We do not know what prayers the faithful recited in the early period for their bandage, and indeed still today each Zoroastrian has a measure of freedom in this; but it seems probable that the first generations of believers simply used selected verses from the Gathās themselves, together with several short mathras in Gothic dialect, which constitute the great prayers of Zoroastrianism. The chief among these is the Ahuna vairya, known in later times simply as the Ahunvar, "the most sacred and probably the most ancient of the Zoroastrian formulas of devotion." In the Younger Avesta it is said that, after he had brought the Amesa Spenta into being, Ahura Mazda himself uttered this prayer "before the creation of the sky, before the waters, before the earth, before the plants; before the creation of the four-legged cow, before the birth of the two-legged just man." He taught it, it is declared, to Zoroaster's fratres; and after he had been born into the physical world, the prophet taught it to men. There is no reason to doubt that the prayer emanates from Zoroaster himself, for it appears closely linked with the Gathās; but so baffling are the subtleties of the prophet's thought, and so intricate his use of language, that there is still no agreement about the precise meaning of this venerable utterance. The following is a conflation of four different recent renderings:  

"He (Ahura Mazda) is as much the desired Master (abhu) as the Judge (rāte) according to Aša. (He is) the doer of the acts of good intention (vohu-manah-), of life. To Mazda Ahura (is) the kingdom (khshathra-), whom they have established as pastor for the poor." The word rendered by "poor" is draghu, the Avestan forerunner of Persian darvish, which was used, it seems, in a special sense for "the true follower of the creed of the Prophet, the meek and pious man who stands firmly on the side of God and makes himself solely dependent on Him." With its declaration of the power and will of Ahura Mazda to aid the draghu, the Ahuna vairya was not only a profession of faith but also a magha securing protection, and it came to be regarded as the most powerful single weapon which there is against the forces of evil, being used by Zoroastrians in this way as the Lord's Prayer has often been used by Christians. It is the first prayer learnt by a Zoroastrian in childhood, and it remains his recourse throughout life, for because of its sanctity it may be spoken at need in place of every other form of devotion.

Another great prayer in the Gothic dialect, which also is wholly Gothic in spirit, is the Airyomā iṣyed, which is said to be the most triumphant of all prayers, for it will be spoken by the Sāosyants at Frāshō-koršt, [A.L.] When they utter it, "Anga Mainyu will hide himself beneath the earth, the earth and the demons will hide themselves. The dead will rise up, and within their revived bodies the breath of life will remain incorporeal." The exact translation of the Airyomā iṣyed is inevitably disputed, but less than that of the Ahuna vairya. The following version or (its approximate) seems generally accepted: "May the longed-for Airyaman come to the help of the men and women of Zoroaster, to the help of [their] good intention (vohu-manah-). The conscience (daēnā-) which earns the desirable recompense, (for it) I ask the longed-for reward (ašt-) of righteousness (aša-) which Ahura Mazda will measure out."
The brief Ašm vohā, with which most Zoroastrian devotions end, seems to be a māthra designed to concentrate the mind upon āta, and to invoke the aid of Aša Vahīsta, the word or name occurring thrice within the twelve words of the prayer. Again translations vary widely. The following appears perhaps the least forced, although open to grammatical objections: "Aša [is] good, it is best. According to wish it is, according to wish: "it shall be for us. Āta belongs to Aša Vahīsta.""48

The last of the great Zoroastrian prayers is the Yeşeh hātām. This is a remodelling of the Gothic verse Y, 57.22, which in one translation runs:49

"At whose sacrifice Ahura Mazdā knows the best for me according to righteousness. Those who were and are, those I shall worship by their names and shall approach with praise". The first line of the prophet’s words, with "whose" in the singular, presumably refers to some particular divinity, to whom sacrifice has just been made; and this has been somewhat awkwardly altered in the prayer to give instead a wholly general application. Literally the Yeşeh hātām runs: "At whose of-the-beings [masc.] and of whom [fem. pl.] therefore Ahura Mazdā knows the better for worship according to righteousness, those (male beings) and those (female ones) we shall worship". The intention evidently is to offer veneration to all those divinities who belong to the ōcenn creation, and whose worship is therefore proper for Zoroastrians. The Yeşeh hātām "regularly concludes the litanies of the yasna, in which long series of gods are enumerated and praised",49 and it is also often repeated in reciting the yasna, the hymns to individual gods. As has been observed, in uttering it the community praises all beneficent divinities "whatever their names and whoever they may be, so that none is named and none forgotten, as a prudent measure lest one god should be forgotten who is worthy of laud and praise and who shall suffer if he did not receive it".51

Yeşeh hātām, representing as it does an adaptation of a Gothic verse,52 belongs, it seems, to a stage when Zoroaster’s followers were making liturgical developments. Apart from his own Gāthās, and the short Ahura vaitiyā, which could be used by even the humblest member of his community, Zoroaster does not seem to have created any fixed devotional utterances for his followers. Presumably he was content that, apart from using these māthras, they should worship and pray with freshly-minted words, in the tradition of their forefathers. One of the earliest believers, it seems, shaped the Ahriman ūyo (unless this too was fashioned by the prophet himself),52 and thereafter, at some later stage, the leaders of the community evidently decided to authorise a set liturgy to accompany the daily act of worship, the yasna. This seems to have been done at a time when the Gothic dialect was fading away—a development which may, indeed, have prompted their action, with the conviction arising that for this service, which embodied so much that was central to the prophet’s thought, his followers should continue to use words as close as possible in form to those with which he himself had prayed. The result was the putting together of the “worship of seven chapters”, Yasna Hāptidehī.54 This is a liturgy in seven short sections (one in verse), which probably represents a collection of what was remembered then in the Gothic dialect by old priests, who chose still to use ancient forms of words which their fathers had taught them; and it is hardly surprising if such works, garnered from traditionalists, should contain archaic matter, however well adapted to orthodox Zoroastianism.

Originally the seven chapters were probably māthras addressed in the main to the lesser ahuras, Mithra and *Vouruna Apmā Napīt, at the offerings to fire and water. In their existing form, however, neither of these diversities is invoked, but the whole liturgy is devoted to Ahura Mazda; and the verse section contains a plea to him: "Keep thou in mind..." mazdām korē,55 which underlines, in antique fashion, the link between Lord Wisdom and the powers of thought.56 Despite its ancient character, however, much of the text is informed by the spirit of the prophet’s teachings. Thus its first words are: "O Ahura Mazda, that we choose for ourselves, that by beautiful Aša we may think and say and do

to be the utterance of Zoroaster, having this on "the explicit statement at the beginning of the Homily on the Yeşeh hātām prayer (Y, 21:1-2)", i.e. "(Hymnally) on the devotional utterance of righteous Zoroaster" (yazna vašl ašané šavakhtwêreb). This was undoubtedly how the prayer was regarded, and with reason, since it is so closely modelled on Y, 51.22; but it is impossible to ascribe the actual adaptation, with its syntactical awkwardness, to so inspired and skilled a māthra as the prophet himself.

48 Ibid. Although this interpretation appears to the present writer convincing, it is naturally not accepted by all Avestan scholars. Other recent ones have been based on a later rendering of Y, 57.22, which is less satisfactory, as to both grammar and sense, than Henning’s. See, independently, Gershevitch, AHR, 165 ff.; Humbach, Die Gathas I, 49, and in detail, with references to earlier interpretations and a full discussion of the Pahlavi renditions, H.-J. Schmidt, "On the origin and tradition of the Avestan yeşeh- Ḵāīm prayer", Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute XX, 1960, 324-44.
49 Gershevitch (loc. cit., and further JNES XXIII, 1964, 17) took the Yeşeh hātām itself
50 With the emendation of kyou to *koyē, Ahmād was taken by Bartholomae as the dat.pl. of a first person pronoun, although the use of āta is then admittedly awkward. For other renderings, with discussions, see Nyberg, Rel., 169 with 466; Humbach, Die Gathas I, 30 n. 39; Gershevitch, BSOAS XXV, 1962, 290.
51 Thal of W. B. Henning, see above, p. 218.
52 Nyberg, Rel., 270.
53 See above, p. 255.
54 For the possibility see below, p. 255.
55 See above, pp. 39-40.
such things as are best for both existences. With (desire for) the rewards for best actions we urge the taught and untaught, the rulers and the ruled to give peace and pasturage to the cow." The last phrase seems to stem directly from a line in the *Gāthās*; and there is strong emphasis in the liturgy on such *Gāthā* concepts as āša in association with khāsthra, the kingdom of heaven to be won here on earth. "For you" (declare the worshippers to Ahura Mazda) "we would accomplish and we would teach as we are able. For the sake of Āsha and Vohu Manah and Vohu Khāsthra, O Ahura, (we) offer praises upon praises, words upon words, sacrifices upon sacrifices." Thus then we worship Ahura Mazda, who created cattle and order (āša), created waters and good plants, created light and earth and all things good by his dominion (khāsthra) and greatness and good acts. Him then we worship with the best of sacrifices, (we) who abide with the cow." In this liturgy, moreover, we encounter for the first time the expression "Bounteous Immortals", Ameša Spantas, that characteristic Zoroastrian phrase that excludes the *dārōs* from worship: 

"So then we worship the good beings, male and female, the Bounteous Immortals, ever-living, ever-benefiting, who hold by good purpose (vohu男子-)." Veneration is also offered to "the fraoásis of the just, men and women," and the inclusion of the latter may well be, as we have seen, also specifically Zoroastrian.

The offering to fire was made of old during the recitation of *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, probably after Y. 36, which is devoted to the invocation and praise of fire; and the offering to water probably at the end of the liturgy, whose second part is devoted to the waters. The *soațhra* to fire was the central point of the act of worship, and so was fittingly made halfway through the service, in order to be fully shielded by the protective words. The *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* itself was now made, however, the centre of a longer liturgy of purely *Gāthā* texts. There is a brief appendix in this dialect to the "seven chapters", a curious little text which honours the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* itself, and also springs and water-courses, paths and mountains, earth and heaven, wind, fabulous creatures, *haoma*, and the

return of missionary priests. Otherwise it is the great *Gāthā* utterances which were used. Each section of the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* concludes with the *Yeşhē hātyam*, which ensures that all the Ameša Spantas are thereby invoked; and then the whole is framed by Zoroaster's own *Gāthā*, used simply liturgically, not as words to accompany ritual acts. The *Gāthās* are arranged in groups according to metre; and in the terminology of the Zoroastrians themselves, each group forms a single *Gāthā*, so that there are five *Gāthās* in all. The first group is by far the longest, and this was set before the "seven chapters"; the other four were placed after them. Then the *Gāthās* themselves were protected by the other *Gāthā* *māθra*, that is, the short prayers. Before the first group the *Ahuna vaerya* is recited, followed by *Ašm vohā*, and *Yeşhē hātyām*; and these are repeated after each of the seven separate hymns which make up the *Gāthā* (the *Ahuna vaerya* itself four times, the other two respectively thrice and once). This first *Gāthā* is accordingly known as *Gāthā Ahumnāvaiti* "The *Gāthā* possessing the *Ahuna vaerya*". This greatest of prayers is not recited with any of the other four *Gāthās*, which are all named from their own opening words. The lesser *Yeşhē hātyām* and *Ašm vohā* are recited after every section of all the *Gāthās*; and at the end of the fifth *Gāthā* is placed protectively the other great prayer, the *Aryōma tiyyo*, again followed by *Ašm vohā* and *Yešhē hātyām*. (It thus comes about that Y. 53, the "Wedding *Gāthā*", which in part celebrates the nuptials of Zoroaster's daughter Pouruṣītā, is directly followed by the prayer to Aiyarnam, *yaṣata* of marriage; and this increases the possibility that this prayer was in fact composed by the prophet himself.) It is probably this group of *Gāthā* texts, from the first *Ahuna vaerya* to the *Aryōma tiyyo*, which made up the original *Sūta* *yesna* "Words of praise and worship", constituting the first fixed liturgy of the faith. The *Gāthās* themselves had evidently been exactly memorised from the beginning; and now, framed by them, the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* also took on immutable form, whereas the *Hūm Yašt*, accompanying what at this stage was apparently still a separate rite, continued in fluid transmission, composed afresh by each generation, so that, despite the high antiquity of its subject matter, it survives only in Younger Avestan form. None of this development can be even ap-
proximately dated; for we know neither when Gothic Avestan was spoken, nor how long it took to evolve into the Younger Avestan of the great yazna. There is no evidence either as to when the ritual and liturgy of the Zoroastrian yazna was extended to absorb the separate haoma rite and to include many Younger Avestan texts, whereby the Gothic Stavala yazna came to stand at the centre of an extended liturgy of 72 chapters. The nature of the additional yazna texts makes it probable, however, that these latter developments did not take place before the historical period—perhaps in part as late as Sasanian times.

For the prehistoric period there is no information at all about the ecclesiastical organisation of Zoroastrianism—whether there was a single recognized head of the community, considered as successor of the prophet, or whether a presbyterian system of church government prevailed. A scrap of evidence is, however, vouchsafed by the Avesta about the pursuit of religious learning; for in the Farvardin Yasli Saena, son of Ahurmazd, is honoured as the first among the faithful to have had a hundred pupils. This must have been a large group for ancient days, when all knowledge was transmitted orally; and it indicates not only Saena’s eminence as a teacher, but also the growing size of the community—a fact which would be more significant if one could determine when he flourished. The name Ahurmazd has been interpreted as “He who prays the aha”, that is, the Yaiha aha vairyo or Ahuvar. and this suggests that Saena’s grandparents were already devout Zoroastrians, so that he himself should have lived at least two generations after the prophet. It must have been Saena and other forgotten scholars of these dark centuries who gradually shaped the secondary religious literature of the faith (represented by the oldest parts of the Younger Avesta), and continued to develop its theology. Zoroaster had shattered old patterns of belief, not only by rejecting the daena but also by preaching that Ahura Mazda was Creator and absolute Lord of all spnida divine beings, and by revealing the existence of the six great Bounteous Immortals. New relationships had therefore to be worked out for the Zoroastrian pantheon; and for studying these a rule applies which is valid for polytheisms, even though Zoroastrianism is not polytheistic in any ordinary sense: that no divinity should be considered in isolation, for to do so is to dismember a coherent system and break it misleadingly into parts, a process whereby each part also loses a large measure of its own significance.

At the heart of Zoroaster’s divine system is of course Ahura Mazda, and close to him the six Amsa Spantas, who, as the first-created, shared in his fashioning of the other spnida beings. Around them are grouped these lesser yazdas, knowing no rivalry or emulation, but aiding one another, as they are ready to aid mankind, in order to achieve the one great aim of conquering evil. In Persian terminology they are all hamkars, fellow-workers, with the six; and the complex patterns of their relationships, evolved doubtless gradually in priestly schools, are set out in detail in the Pahlavi books. To take some clear, uncomplicated examples, Vohu Manah, as guardian of cattle, has as his hamkars the Moon-yazata, Mâh (since the moon keeps the seed of the Uniquely-created Bull), and also Gâûr Urbân. The yazata of Fire naturally helps Aša Vaihsta, as does Rapithwina, the spirit of noon. Khshathra Vairya, lord of the sky, has for his associates Hvar, the sun-yazata, and the spirit of the sky itself, Asmân, the Endless Light of Paradise, Anahit Raocâ, and also great Mithra. For the needs of the earth Spanta Armaiti receives help from the Waters, Apas, and the divine beings of water, Ardví Sûrâ and the “high Lord”, Vouruna, Apsm Nâpi, Haurvatât, caring for water itself, has for hamkars Tîrça and Vâta, who bring rain, and the Pâvâsi, who distributes it; and Amaratât, guardian of plants, is helped by Zam, yazdâ of the earth. As this selective summary shows, some of the divine beings themselves personify what one or other of the six Amsa Spantas protects, and this makes the pantheon a complex one, full of criss-crossing webs of alliance and interdependence. Yet though this is difficult for alien understandings, it can have created no stumbling block for Iranian converts, to whom such relationships were familiar already from pagan days. Thus, to take one example, Mithra had formerly been venerated as lord of fire and of its great representative the sun, although both fire and sun were themselves personified as divinities. In his case there was probably now a special development, in that Zoroaster regarded fire (which through Mithra had been seen as the instrument of aša) as the creation of Aša; and so in Zoroastrianism it was Mithra’s link with the sun which was chiefly emphasized. He was therefore hailed as hamkâr of Khshathra on high, together with Hvar, rather than of Aša and Âtar here below. This link continued, moreover, the ancient partnership of the two lesser Ahuras, since Vouruna as lord of water aids Armaiti, who is Khshathra’s own constant associate.
Though the yasatas came to be grouped as hamkārs, they were still defined by their own separate functions, which created their essential being. Thus though Mithra aided Khshathra, he did so without resigning his own especial role as personification of the covenant, with its many ramifications; and Vararāthragha, Victory, now became "standard-bearer" for all other yasatas, carrying their flag, metaphorically, in the battle against wrong. His task was to ensure victory for the Zoroastrian faith, and hence for goodness; and the most exalted of the temple fires were later to be called by his name. What helped to keep the concept of each yazata sharply distinct, despite their close association, was the existence still of separate hymns in honour of each. There was no reason to neglect the panegyrics of beings acknowledged as spāna, whom to praise and worship was in itself a valuable activity; and little in the yasts seems to have needed change to fit them for Zoroastrian worship. Specifically Zoroastrian elements were naturally added, however, to adapt them to the new theology. The names of Ahura Mazda and his prophet occur frequently, and half the existing yasts begin with one of two formulas: either "Ahura Mazda said to Zarathuštra" (mraṣ satīr mazād spītamī sarathuśtra) or "Zarathuštra asked Ahura Mazda" (pṛorasat sarathuśtra ahurmazdā). By this means each hymn is presented as having been revealed to the prophet. The vocative "O Spitama Zarathuštra" is also often introduced in the body of the work to emphasize this. Sometimes an explicitly Zoroastrian element is more closely interwoven, as in the following verse: "Tistrya ... whom Ahura Mazda created lord and overseer of all stars, as Zarosther of men"; and occasionally a specifically Zoroastrian doctrine informs the text, harmonising so closely, however, with older pagan concepts that it is impossible to pull the strands apart. Perhaps the most interesting of the yasts from this point of view is that in honour of the fravāšī; probably already in the pagan period beliefs about the fravāšī had become linked with the cosmogonic theories which underlie Zarosther's own doctrines about the creations, and so these particular doctrines were readily incorporated in their yasti, to be followed by references to the two spirits and the part played by the fravāšī themselves in the struggle between good and evil. The following are among the most striking verses (presented as usual as the utterance of Ahura Mazda): "If the mighty fravāšī of the just had not given me aid... to the Drug would have been the power, to the Drug the rule, to the Drug corporeal life. Of the two Spirits the Drug would have sat down between earth and heaven; of the two Spirits the Drug would have conquered between earth and heaven. Afterwards the conqueror would not have yielded to the conquered. Agra Mainyu to Spenta Mainyu." 81

This passage exemplifies the collegiality which Zoroastrian theologians attributed to the yasatas. All spāna divinities, having been created by Ahura Mazda, enjoyed independent existence, but used it striving for that end for which he had given it to them, and so afforded him powerful help. This is orthodox doctrine. There are, however, some evidently late verses in a few of the yasts which carry this concept beyond what seems theologically sound. Two of these are modelled on older ones which depict kings and heroes sacrificing to individual yasatas in order to receive specific favours; and the imitative verses represent Ahura Mazda himself acting in the same way. Thus in Yasti 5 (vv. 17-18) it is said that for Ardashīr Sārā "the Creator Ahura Mazda sacrificed in Aryanam Vahyā with haoma, corn, flesh, with barmaman, with skill of tongue ... Then he asked her: 'Grant me this boon, O good, most mighty Ardashīr Sārā Anāhītā, that I may persuade the son of Pourūṣaspā, the just Zarathuštra, to think according to the religion, to speak according to the religion, to act according to the religion' ... These verses are modelled on others in the same yasti (vv. 104-5), where Zarosther, coming at the end of a long line of pagan heroes, is represented as sacrificing in this way, and as asking, in precisely these terms, that he 'may persuade the son of Arvāt.


This is a recurrent formula used of priestly rituals, and has been much discussed. The AV phrase is haomayā gana, which, it is generally agreed, must be slightly corrupt. Thiene (ZDMG 1927, 75 ff.) proposed emending to haoma *yaoma bara-milk with haoma", but, as Gershevitch pointed out (AHM, 192), this does not correspond with any known ritual offering. He himself (ibid., 192) interpreted the two words as representing properly a compound, *haom-pay-gana "with haoma-the milk = milk with an admixture of haoma": but haoma is not ritually subordinated to milk, rather the contrary. Hoffmann, ASSS 8, 1956, 23, suggested reading haoma 36 gana "with haoma which (as) mixed with milk"; and Fleming (verbatim, in 1959) emended to haoma *yaom gana "with haoma, corn, milk". If one takes gana in the sense of "flesh" instead of "milk", this in fact describes the offering of the yasna, i.e. the parihaoma, durainah (or cake of unleavened bread), and zastrah to fire.
aspa, the mighty Kavi Vištāspa" to accept the faith. Then in Yast 15 the Creator is shown (vv. 2-3) as asking of Vayu the boon "that I may shine down the creation of Aŋha Mainyu, but by no means that of Spanda Mainyu". Even apart from the naivety of the content, the shaky grammar of the Avestan marks this as late. In Yast 8 (v. 25) Ahura Mazda is represented as responding to Tīstrya's plea for worship, and through worship, strength, by sacrificing to himself, thus setting an example for men to follow; and in Yast 10 (v. 123) it is briefly said that the Creator sacrificed for Mithra "in the bright House of Song", that is, in Paradise. Much has been made of these passages by some Western scholars, as yielding proof of heterodoxy, of battles of allegiance waged and won, for instance, by putative devotees of Vayu, who thus managed to set their defiant stamp on a Zoroastrian text;83 but though the verses would doubtless have incurred the censure of the prophet, there seems no need to refine on them to this extent. They appear inept rather than malignant, and to be born of a tendency inherited from Indo-Iranian times. This has been defined as "kathenotheism", that is "a theism which attributes the totality of cosmic and divine functions to various deities in turn (katheno). This kathenotheism is, as it were, a time-restricted monism".84 Such a tendency, deeply ingrained, and still in a measure fostered by the yaštś, was evidently not immediately eradicated by Zarathushtra's teachings. The yaṣṭa by whom praise was being offered was still to some extent for the worshipper at that moment a being to be exalted above all others; and for a Zoroastrian there could be no more impressive way to laud any divinity than to represent him as being honoured by Ahura Mazda himself, no better means of inculcating his worship than to state that the example for it had been set by the Creator. Hence, doubtless, these irregular passages, in which, however, it is plain that no blasphemy was intended, but only exaggerated praise of the lesser yaṣṭa. The general character of these various hymns and their place in Zoroastrian worship, are sufficient warranty of this. It must also be borne in mind that the yaṣṭś are hymns, which were chanted by private individuals or their family priests, but had no place in the "inner" worship of the pārv.85 It is not difficult to find utterances that seem heretical in Christian hymns, which are not scanned for error in the manner of authorised liturgical texts.

The verses which we have just been considering do not in fact rightly belong to this present chapter, since they are plainly late compositions; but they serve to illustrate the difficulty of using a fluid oral literature to trace theological or other developments, for such a literature, composed fresh in each generation, can all too readily absorb new elements without showing any signs of interpolation. Plagiarism is no fault, and (as we have seen earlier with the yaṣṭś of Aši and Ardvi Sūrā) it is not always easy to establish which is a dependent text, which the original. This is not a problem in the case of the long hymn to Sraoša, which exists as part of the extended yaṣna liturgy (Y. 57), and is unquestionably modelled on the Mihr Yašt. What is impossible to determine in this case is when the cult of Sraoša became so important that it demanded such a hymn in his honour. The yaṣṭa is a Greek figure, and the prophet invokes him impressively as "greatest of all (visp. maxïšum)" (Y. 33.5)—most probably because of the immense power of prayer. This thought seems to have been developed by Zoroastrian theologians, and gradually, as the difficult concept of Spanda Mainyu became absorbed in that of the Creator himself (for which again there is precedent in the Gāthās), Sraoša took over his function as protector of man, and was hailed as Ahura Mazda's vice-regent here on earth. In living Zoroastrianism he receives accordingly more devotions than any other yaṣṭa. It is likely, however, that this was a gradual development, and full consideration of it will be left therefore to a later volume.

Contemplation of the divinity of prayer leads us to that of a group of prayers, called in Persian niyāyeš, which must in their oldest form belong to the early days of Zoroastrianism. These are still recited, either daily or when appropriate, among the private devotions of the faithful. There are five of them, which are set always in the following order:86 firstly the Khoršid Niyāyeš in honour of the sun, to be recited thrice a day, during the prayers of the daytime gāhs. This is never said alone, but is always immediately followed by the Mihr Niyāyeš, addressed to the great yaṣṭa who accompanies the sun across the heavens. These two are commonly referred to therefore by the one name, as Khoršid-Mihr Niyāyeš. Then there is the Māh Niyāyeš, which should be recited at least thrice a month during the night prayers, at the significant phases of the moon; and finally two niyāyeš addressed to the Waters and Fire. The words of the five prayers evidently did not become fixed for many generations, and in their surviving forms they contain both late verses and some very old ones. The

83 See Wikander, Vayu, 48-50.
84 B. Heimann, Indian and Western Philosophy, London 1937, 35. The term itself was coined by Max Müller with reference primarily to Vedic religion.
85 On these terms see above, pp. 166-7, 168.
one that has undergone the most drastic change seems the Ābān Niya'yēs, which perhaps once contained invocations of *Vouruna, but has come to consist almost wholly of verses from the hymn to Ardvi Sūrā Anāhītā. *Vouruna is still honoured, however, with his brother Ahura Mithra, in whose niya'yēs (v. 12) worship is offered to the pair in antique style, as "Mithra and the high Lord" (mithra ahura horozanta).87 There is a similar invocation in the Khoršāt Niya'yēs (v. 12), where ancient elements are blended with purely Zoroastrian ones. It runs: "We sacrifice for Mithra, in all lands master of the land, whom Ahura Mazda created as having most khwariman among the spiritual yazatas. So may he come to our help—Mithra and the high Lord". Later in the same niya'yēs (v. 18), there is another archaic usage, this time a reference to the waters as the "wives of the Ahura" (ahurānīsh ahurāke). In the Ātās Niya'yēs too there are some evidently ancient verses, belonging to the cult of the hearth fire,88 but this is naturally the most strongly Zoroastrian in spirit of all the niya'yēs, and embodies no fewer than four verses from the Gāthās themselves. These were chosen evidently because they contain references to Aša, lord of fire, and a declaration of the spiritual purpose which should inform the act of offering the ātās zōhr. The first three, Y. 33.12-14 (which form ĀN 1-3), are as follows:89 "Arise for me, O Ahura! Take strength through devotion, O Holiest Spirit, Mazda! (Take) power through the good offering, strong might through righteousness, plenitude through good intention. For (my) help, O far-seeing one, show me the incomparable things which (are) yours—all of the kingdom, O Ahura, who are the reward of good intention. O Bounteous Arma'īt, instruct our consciences (daēnā-) through Aša. Then as gift Zoroaster gives to Mazda the life indeed of his own body, the choiceness of his good intentions, and those of his acts and thoughts which accord with righteousness, and (his) obedience and dominion". Later in the niya'yēs (v. 17) comes the great eschatological verse, Y. 34.4: "Then, O Ahura, we desire your fire, powerful through āsā, most swift, mighty, to be of manifest help to (your) supporter, but of visible harm, O Mazda, to the hostile man...".

It seems likely that these Gaelic verses were made part of the prayer to fire in the early days of the faith, while Zoroaster's own words were still fully understood by the instructed, and were a source of direct inspiration to his followers. Another Gothic verse, known from its first words as the Kûm-nā Mazda (Y. 49.7) came to be used as a protective matahr or bād when a shield was needed against evil. It runs: "Whom, O Mazda, have you appointed protector for me, when the wicked one (dravazant-) seeks to lay hold of me for harm, other than your fire and (good) purpose, through the actions of which two righteousness shall be realised, O Ahura? This doctrine do you proclaim to my conscience (daēnā-)?90 It may even be that the prophet during his own lifetime taught his followers to use his words appropriately in this way, and that this was among the devotional usages which he himself established.

Of the first generations of those who bravely upheld his faith we know the names only, preserved in the Farvardin Yāšt. This hymn contains a great muster of the names of individuals whose fravāšis are worthy of veneration,91 among them the "first teachers and first hearers of the doctrine" (paôtirya- tekeša-, paôtirya- sāmō-ghūš).92 Here are named Mādihōvī, māgha, Zoroaster's cousin and first convert, Kavi Vištāspa, and a few others familiar from the Gāthās or the tradition; but most are wholly unknown, men of a remote and forgotten time. This time seems to have been of long duration, to allow for the compilation of such lists, and occasionally indeed several generations of the one family are named. Thus not only is Saēna of the hundred pupils honoured, but also his great-grandson Utyautiy92 so that, if one includes Aḥīm sōtī, five generations of Zoroastrians are here represented, spanning, one would suppose, some 750 years.93 Unfortunately there is no evidence to show when the last name was added in the yāšt; but at least it can be said that no Medean or Persian is venerated there, whether as convert or teacher, king or priest.

What is characteristic of early Zoroastrianism is that the fravāšis of a group of women are revered, headed by those of the prophet's wife 94

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87 It is noticeable that in the niya'yēs this ancient invocation (on which see above, p. 49) has not undergone the inversion to ahura mithra which occurs in later yazata passages (e.g. Y. 2.11.), which were composed at a time when the Ahura's identity as *Vouruna Arpān Napāt had evidently been forgotten, and he was given the precedence due to Ahura Mazda, even though this violated the old rule of divvad composition (that the shorter word must precede). See Gerhardewich, AHIM, 44.

88 See above, pp. 134-5.

89 On this translation of vv. 12, 14, which is essentially Humbach's, see above, pp. 215-9.

90 With the reading, in the first line, of daēdī instead of daēdī, with better manuscript support, see Humbach, Gathas I, 139, II, 70, B. T. Achlander, Gāthā Society Publications 14, Bombay 1939, 72 (in Gujarati; cited by Taraporewala, The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra, 995). The verse now forms part of the Sōra Bāy, where it is followed by Y. 44.16 (with omission of the first line), Yd. 8.21 and the third line of Y. 49.10, the whole group of texts being referred to as the Kûm-nā Mazda. (For the full text of the Sōra Bāy as it is now recited see, e.g., Darmesteter, ZA II, 686-8)

91 The long list is commented on by Darmesteter, ZA II, 529 ff; for more general observations see Lommel, Die Yāst, 100-12. One of these early Zoroastrians (probably, from his place in the list, a Kušari of the prophet) took, or was given, the name Bērdōz, the "enemy to the daēnās" (v. 98), a courageous way of declaring allegiance to the new faith.

92 Y. 13.17, 149.

93 V. 125.

94 This point is made by Burrow, JRA 1971, 138. On Saēna see above, p. 266.
Hvôvi and his daughters, and of Hutaosã, Vištāspa's queen.85

There are two Avestan texts which yield some slight evidence for the geographical advance of the faith. One is the Zamyâd Yâstî, where it is said (v. 66) that the royal Khvārenah accompanies him "who rules there where is the Lake Kašaoya, which receives the Haftmânt...". The Haftmânt is the modern Helmand, so Lake Kašaoya must be what is now the Hamûn Lake in Seistan, in the south-east of Iran. The rulers of that region had evidently become such loyal Zoroastrians by the time this verse was composed that a connection was sought for them with the kavis of old, that is, with Vištâspa's line. The justification for this seems to have been a faint similarity between the words Kašaoya and kavis.86 The lake in Seistan came to be regarded as belonging to the kavis, and having been given this association was held to guard in its depths the divinely-preserved seed of the prophet, from which the Sāosîants or Saviours will one day come.87 Such a development could not have taken place in the earliest days of the faith, with memory of the northern kavis still fresh, and the legend of the virgin-born Sāosîants yet to be forged; and it furnishes yet another piece of evidence for the length of the pre-history of Zoroastrianism.

The other text provides more geographical material, but with less direct bearing on the faith. This is the first fargerd or chapter of the Vištâdâd (later corrupted to Vendidad).88 "the code abjuring daëous". This is a collection of miscellaneous pieces of varying antiquity, put together at some relatively late date to form a night office celebrated to snite the powers of darkness. Its nucleus concerns the purity laws, to which were added various heterogeneous works, including this first fargerd.89 In it are enumerated seventeen lands, headed by Aryanâm Vaêjah, some of them otherwise unrecorded, others bearing familiar names. Each was created excellent by Ahura Mazdâ, but suffers its own particular affliction, brought upon it in counter-creation by Angra Mainyûn (which is why, evidently, the text finds a place in the Vendidad). Those lands which can be identified—notably Sughda (Sogdia), Mourû (Margarâna), Bakhthâi (Bactria), Harôyu (Haraiva/Herat), Harakhvâîti (Arachosia) and Haftmânt (Drangiana/Seistan)—all belong to the east and north-east of Iran.90 Various suggestions have been made as to why this list was originally drawn up,91 the most reasonable (in the light of its preservation as a religious work) seeming to be that these were lands which early accepted Zoroastrianism (though later, evidently, than the wholly unknown regions named in the Farâvârdîn Yâstî).92 Khwarezmia does not appear among them; and its absence has been explained as due to its identification, as the land of the prophet's own people, with Aryanâm Vaêjah, the traditional homeland of the Iranians, where all the greatest events in their prehistory were held to have taken place—although it must be admitted that the lines devoted to Aryanâm Vaêjah, which introduce the text, are plainly late in composition.

Aryanâm Vaêjah evidently owes its first place in this list of lands to its legendary importance; but Khwarezmia itself may have had a twofold claim to pre-eminence in the 7th century B.C., both as the homeland (as it is thought) of descendants of the "Avestan" people, and through political supremacy, according to an account given by Herodotus of this region before it was conquered by the Achaemenids. He wrote:93 "There is a plain in Asia which is shut in on all sides by a mountain-range, and in this mountain-range are five openings. The plain lies on the confines of the Chorasmins, Hycanians, Parthians, Sarangians and Thamanaeans, and belonged formerly to the first-mentioned of these peoples. ... A mighty river, called the Aces, flows from the hills enclosing the plain". This river Markwart identified with the Hari Rûd and its continuation, the modern Tejen,94 an identification which has been generally accepted. It seems accordingly that there once existed, while the Medean Empire flourished in the west, an eastern Iranian state which had its centre around Marv and Herat, but which was under Khwarezmian rule.95 When the Persians arrived in these regions, however, in the mid-6th century B.C., the dominant power seems to have been Bactria; and a legend persisted, down into Sasanian times and beyond, which associated

85 Vv. 139-42.
86 The Pahlavi rendering of "Kašaoya" is "Kayânsêh"; kayân being the Middle Persian plural of Av. Arai. Kašaoya is perhaps in fact a derivative of a proper name *Kašu; see Bartholomae, Art. Wb. 471.
87 See in detail in the following chapter.
88 On the name see Benveniste, "Que signifie Vištâdâd?" Henning Mem. Vol. 37-42.
89 On it see Christensen, Le premier chapitre du Vendidad, et l'histoire primitive des tribus iranennes, Copenhagen 1943, with references to earlier works; Herzfeld, Zoroaster and his world, Princeton 1947, 728-70.
91 See, with references, Christensen, op. cit., 1-8. Herzfeld, loc. cit. argued that the list was a "moral introduction to geography" (p. 744), with the workings of dualism being shown in a randomly selected list of lands.
92 See Nyberg, Æl., 313-27, who went so far as to interpret it as showing, through the order in which the countries were listed, the history of the spread of Zoroastrianism.
93 Histories, III, 117.
94 Wehr und Arag, 8-11.
95 Some among those who have accepted the date for Zoroaster of "258 years before Alexander" have identified this Khwarezmian empire with the kingdom of Zari Višâkaya, seeing the overthrow of his dynasty as the work of Cyrus the Great; see Henning, Zoroaster, 42-3.
both Zoroaster and his patron Vištâpa with the Bactrian capital of Balkh. 106 Presumably this, like the legend which sets the karîs in Seistan and made the Hamun Lake holy, was a product of that mixture of piety and patriotism which led various Zoroastrian peoples to associate the prophet with their own homelands. The best-known example of this is the action of the Magi, who subsequently transferred Avestan place-names and happenings wholesale to Medean Azarbaijan, in the north-west of Iran, with such thoroughness that scholars long remained confused about their true location. They never succeeded, however, in silencing the older claims of Seistan and Bactria. The existence of these rival eastern traditions is yet another testimony to the ancientness of Zoroastrianism; for it appears that already by the 6th century B.C. it was no longer certainly known where the prophet had in fact lived.

One question for which there seems no hope of finding an answer is how far the various eastern Iranian peoples prayed and worshipped in their own colloquial tongues, apart from the Staota yesiyya and the Gothic prayers and verses, and how far they used Avestan. The state of preservation of the Younger Avesta suggests that there may have been some period when the sacred language was threatened with neglect; but the data are too meagre to allow of useful speculation. What seems certain, from the various scattered indications, is that Zoroastrianism had grown old already in eastern Iran, gaining in numbers, establishing its doctrines and cult, and shaping its literature, before ever it reached the Medes and Persians; for neither in the extant Avesta, nor in Pahlavi translations of lost Avestan books (as distinct from commentaries), is there any reference to western Iranian kings or peoples—not a single proper name or place name, tradition or loan-word. 107 If, as is sometimes claimed (on the basis of the pseudo-historical date for Zoroaster of "258 years before Alexander"), the faith had conquered Persia while in its infancy, its holy works must have taken some imprint from the powerful Magian priesthood. It can only be hoary antiquity which kept the Younger Avesta free from any western Iranian influence. A tradition had clearly been established before Persia became Zoroastrian, and this remained inviolable.

106 For references see Jackson, Zoroaster, 199-201, and further in Vol. II.
107 The only discernable western elements in the Avesta (such as details of the Yima legend, the use of Greek-Roman measurements in the Yd., and the Babylonian concept of the recurring "world year"), which must have been introduced by the western Iranians, are wholly alien ones from non-Iranian civilisations. Nothing from western Iranian culture itself finds a place there. (On the question of a western as well as an eastern Yagha see Vol. II.)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE LEGENDS OF ZOROASTER AND HIS SONS

With no absolute chronology for any part of the Avesta, there is no means of knowing how soon after Zoroaster's death the legend took shape whereby he is presented not only as a prophet but also as a world-saviour, who through his own actions and those of his miraculously-born sons will bring about the restoration of the original state of happiness for the world and man; but there are references to this legend in the Farvardin and Zam Yâstî, and it is set out fully in Pahlavi texts which evidently derive, directly or indirectly, from lost books of the Avesta. It undoubtedly developed and took form bit by bit; and in the final version theologically profound concepts intermingle with more superficially wonderful matter.

Concerning the birth of Zoroaster the Dinkard 1 relates how three things, his khwarr (Av. khvârnak) or heaven-sent glory, his frauâhr (Av. frauâši), guarding or informing spirit, and his tan-gôhr, physical body, were "united in his future mother to form the perfect man, under the guidance of divine powers". At Ohmarzêd's command the prophet's khwarr was brought from the world of light to the sun, from there to the moon, and thence to the stars. From there it descended to the heart of Zoroaster's maternal grandfather, Frâhîm Hvâng-zômâs; and from that moment the fire there burnt perpetually, needing no fuel. From this hearth-fire the khwarr passed to Frâhîm Hvâng-zômâs' wife, the mother of Dughdôv (Av. Dughdôvä). Dughdôv, herself born with this khwarr, radiated light about her, illuminating evil darkness; but the dâns afflicted the people among whom she grew up in cruel ways, and put it into their hearts that the girl was a sorceress and the cause of their sufferings. So her father sent her away to the house of the chief of the Spîtama clan, the father of Pourûsasp. Thus as so often the spênda powers turned the wicked doings of the dâns to good.

Zoroaster's frauâhr had meantime been existing in the same form as that of the Amahraspands (Av. Amûša Sponsâs); and it was escorted by Nêroyosang (Nairyôsâna), the divine messenger, and Jam (Yima) king of the primeval paradise, 2 to where the Amahraspands Vâhman and Ard-
vahisht had formed a hóm (haoma) stalk, "as tall as a man, fresh and very beautiful". The frauahr was set within this stalk, which was brought from the "endless light" of heaven down to earth and placed upon a tall tree. After Pouruasap had married Dughdov, Vahman and Ardvahisht met him walking in the meadows and led him to this tree. Seeing the hóm in all its beauty he wanted to fell the tree to get at it; but Vahman helped him instead to climb up to reach it, and he bore it back to his wife. Meanwhile Zoroaster's physical substance, the tan-gohr, had been entrusted to Hordad and Amurdad, lords of waters and plants. They caused the clouds to let rain fall, plentiful and warm, to the joy of cattle and men. Counseled by Vahman and Ardvahisht, Pouruasap led six white heifers out to graze; and although they had borne no calves their udders became full of milk, in which was the prophet's tan-gohr, received through the rain-nourished plants. Pouruasap drove the heifers home for his wife to milk, and he himself crushed the hóm stalk and mixed it with the milk, and he and Dughdov both drank. Thus Zoroaster's khwarr, frauahr and tan-gohr became united in his mother through the actions of Vahman and Ardvahisht, Hordad and Amurdad, and their creations, while Shahrevar and Spandarmad, through sky and earth, provided the setting for this great event; and so healing was the prophet's presence in the world that, while he grew up, the waters and plants revived and throve, and Ahriman retreated in alarm.\(^7\)

The significance of the three components of Zoroaster's being, it has been suggested, is that through the khwarr, frauahr and tan-gohr he received "his ordination as priest, warrior and herdman",\(^4\) the triple vocation attributed to him in Yt. 13.89, and strongly emphasised in the tradition. "Pouruasap said to Zardust: 'I thought that I had begot a son who was priest, warrior and herdman...'; and Zardust replied: 'I who am your son am priest, warrior and herdman'."\(^5\) Khwarr is interpreted as divine grace,\(^5\) representing the priesthood; the martial frauahr, protecting against evil, stood; it is thought, for the warriors; and the tan-gohr, transmitted by plants and cattle, for the herdman. The prophet in his miraculous birth thus represented all human society; and since the physical creations had their part in his begetting, the story of his coming into the world emphasised also Zoroaster's own teaching of the profound alliance existing between man and nature in the striving for Fraēgirid.

\(^7\) Yt. 17. 18-19.
\(^4\) Barr, art. cit., 36.
\(^5\) Zdd/inrom, XI. 2 (ed. BTA, 57/xxxx; transl. West as XVIII.7-3, SBE XLVII, 148-9).

Zoroaster is said to have been the only child ever to laugh at birth, instead of weeping\(^8\)—a fitting tradition about a prophet who taught that laughter and joy belong to God, and tears and grief to the Devil. In the legend various incidents are related showing how the dēas, who had earlier persecuted his mother, now tried to destroy the infant, again by instilling into men's minds the idea that the divine radiance surrounding it through its khwarr was something evil.\(^8\) Accordingly Pouruasap is said to have tried repeatedly to do away with the child. First he laid it on firewood, which he sought to light; but the flames would not take hold. Then he put it in the path of a herd of cattle; but a bull stood over it and protected it from the hooves. Then it was placed where horses would trample it, but a stallion saved it in the same way. Next it was carried to the lair of a she-wolf, in expectation that the savage beast would kill it; but she accepted it among her own cubs, and Vahman brought an ewe to the den which suckled it. (It was impossible in Zoroastrian legend for the wolf herself to give milk to the infant, since wolves are regarded as daēvīd creatures.\(^9\))

Further legends of the prophet's childhood tell of his exceptional understanding and wisdom, and of his opposition even as a boy to the cult of the dēas. One relates how a priest of the dēas was a guest in his father's house and was invited to say the formal matthra before food. Zoroaster strenuously objected, to Pouruasap's displeasure, and the affronted priest departed pronouncing maledictions, only to fall dead from his horse as he rode away.\(^10\) Here as elsewhere the prophet's hostility to dēs worship is represented as founded solely on what he regarded as the wickedness of the beings who were venerated, and not on the manner of their cult.\(^11\)

The legends which remain best known and most current among Zoroastrians today are those concerned with the prophet's conversion of Vištāsp. It is said that at Vištāsp's own court he met with hostility from

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\(^8\) Cf. Yt. VII. 3-2 (Mole, Legenda, 9). Cf. Dk. VII. 3-25 (ibid., p. 33) and for other references see Jackson, Zoroaster, 37 n. 4, 5.
\(^9\) See Dk. VII. 3-28 11 (Mole, Legenda, 9 ff.).
\(^10\) Dk. VII. 3-2-35 (Mole, Legenda, 35-7).
\(^11\) Cf. e.g., Dk. VII. 4-12-14 (Mole, Legenda, 45). With regard to the lesser powers of evil there is a curious and evidently popular legend of how a female drag sought to seduce the prophet, claiming to be Spandarmad; and how by triple adjuration the seemingly lovely creature was forced to turn her back on the prophet, revealing hideousness and corruption (Dk. VII. 4-15, Mole, op. cit. 53). Here the term drag is used of an evil being performing a part usually assigned to a pairīdād.
the kayag and karabs (kavis and karapans), with whom he disputed at a
great assembly—a tradition which may well be based on reality, for
Vīstāsp must have had his own priests and seers, who would hardly have
welcomed a new prophet claiming divine authority. After three days of
debate Zoroaster is said to have triumphed, only to be traduced by his
enemies to Vīstāsp, who had him cast into prison. From here, it is related,
he won his release, and also the willing ear of Vīstāsp, by curing a favourite
horse of the king's, which had become suddenly paralysed. The Dīnkard
refers allusively to what was plainly a well-known legend; and the
details, which suggest the workings of popular fancy, are found only in the
late Zardvēstī Nāma. According to this account the prophet cured each
limb of the horse in return for a particular concession by the king; firstly,
that Vīstāsp should himself accept the faith; secondly, that his son Isfandiyār
(Spentōdāta) should fight in support of it; thirdly, that his queen
Hēttōs (Hutaosē) should also be converted; and fourthly, that the names
of the prophet's translators should be divulged and these men put to death.
When these four boons had been granted the horse leapt to its feet again,
sound in every limb.

It is then told that Vīstāsp in his turn sought four favours through
Zoroaster, in order finally to establish his belief. Again these are known
in detail only from the Zardvēstī Nāma, but allusions in the Pahlavi books
prove the existence of an older tradition. The first favour was that he,
Vīstāsp, should know his final fate and place in the hereafter; the second,
that his body should be invulnerable; the third, that he should have
knowledge of all things, past, present and future; and the fourth, that his
soul should not leave his body until the resurrection. Zoroaster conceded
all four favours, but stipulated that only one might be enjoyed by Vīstāsp
himself. The king chose the first, and was thereupon visited by the Amahr-
apands Vahman and Ardvaḥiṣṭ, together with the Fire of Omrōzd,
whose radiance awed the king and his courtiers. Vīstāsp received through
Ardvaḥiṣṭ a bowl containing hōm-juice mixed with māng; when he drank
this he lost consciousness and saw in vision the glories of heaven which
awaited him hereafter. On recovering his senses he accordingly accepted

whole-heartedly the new teachings, and persuaded his queen to do the
like. This is all that is related, briefly, in the Dīnkard. The Zardvēstī Nāma
tells how the other three gifts promised by the prophet were distributed:
Vīstāsp's son Pešōtan (Pāsōtān) received a cup of milk from Zoroaster,
and through it became undying. His minister, Jamāsp, by inhaling
certain perfumes, attained all knowledge; and the brave Isfandiyār ate a
pomegranate, and his body became invulnerable, so that he could defend
the faith. This story is much loved and often repeated among Zoroastrians
of the Iranian community, who connect the things through which the boons
were given with the offerings regularly consecrated in the minor service
of worship and thanksgiving, the āfīnagān. There the hōm and māng are
held to be represented by wine. Milk is always present, and incense (hōy)
is offered to the fire, while the pomegranate, symbol of eternity, is the
most highly prized of the fruits which are blessed. It seems possible,
therefore, that the legend of the four gifts was evolved to give a specifically
Zoroastrian significance to the cultic offerings of this service, which is one
very familiar to the laity, and so to teach the people more about the
origins of their faith. (By a somewhat similar development the nine nights'
retreat which follows the barānaun is said by the Iranians to have been
instituted in remembrance of Zoroaster's imprisonment after he was
slandered. This analogy seems, however, to have been thought out
comparatively recently, since there is no reference to it in the Rivāyats,
and no knowledge of it appears among the Parsis.)

The legends which attach to Zoroaster's sons touch deeper levels, and
are attested in the Avesta itself. Thus the three sons begotten by him in
the natural way were said to have initiated and to represent the three
classes of society. The eldest, Isat-vāstra, born of his first marriage, was
regarded as head of the priestly class; and his two sons by the second wife,
Hvrāčīthra and Urvatāt-nāra, were considered to be heads of the warrior
and farming classes respectively. Hvrāčīthra (or presumably his frawafs)
will lead the armies commanded by the immortal Pešōtan son of Vīstās-
pa; and Urvatāt-nāra is "master and judge" (ahu and ratu) of the
kingdom of Yima of the good pastures—an example of the Zoroastrianisation
of one of the myths of pagan Iran. In general the developed narrative

13 Ed., and transl. by P. Rosenberg, Le livre de Zoroastre (Zardvēstī Nāma), St. Petersburg
1902, text p. 48 ff., transl. p. 49 ff.; Eng. transl. by E. B. Eastwick and J. Wilson,
The Parsi Religion, Bombay 1843, 504 ff.
14 D.K. VII.4.85, see Molē, op. cit., 59. Visions of the hereafter form part of the magic
tradition of many pre-literate peoples, as is attested for Iran in the Ardāvy Vītēsī Nāmē
also. See this Handbuch, I. IV, 21, pp. 48-9. Similarly in this latter text the righteous Vīntēs
is given a drink containing māng to make him unconscious and release his spirit to visit the
other world, see AVN 1 36, II 21, 29. Paul Henning, Zoroaster, 32, it seems impossible that
this māng should have been a deadly poison rather than a narcotic, see above, p. 243 n. 11.
15 This tradition is known from the Avesta itself through a simile in a late text, Vīstāsp
Yāttā 4: "May you be as free from sickness, as immortal as Pešōtan!" See Darmesteter,
ZA II, 666.
16 See, e.g. BHA, XXXV 56 (BH A, 301); Ind. Ed. XXXIX 5 (transl. West, SBE V, 144).
17 See f.d. 243 and Benveniste, art. cit., 119.
concerning Zoroaster's sons shows an interweaving of the old Iranian heritance of traditions and legends with new religious beliefs.

This interweaving is at its most striking in the case of what is told of the three sons held to have been born to the prophet posthumously. The belief that there were three such sons evidently developed gradually, partly presumably through analogy with the three historical sons, partly because of the Zoroastrian tendency to have all things in triplicate. The original legend appears to have been that eventually, at the end of "limited time", a son will be born of the seed of the prophet, which is preserved miraculously in a lake (named in the Avesta Lake Kašaoya),19 where it is watched over by 99,999 fravas̄s̄ of the just.20 When Frašō.karati is near, a virgin will bathe in this lake and become with child by the prophet, giving birth to a son, Astvatarata, "he who embodies righteousness". Astvatarata will be the Saosyant, the Saviour who will bring about Fravas̄.karati, smiting "daēnas and men"; and his name derives from Zoroaster's words in Y. 43.16: astvāt ašom ahr ("may righteousness be embodied". The legend of this great Messianic figure, the cosmic saviour, appears to stem from Zoroaster's teaching about the one "greater than good" to come after him (Y. 43.3)21, upon which there worked the profound Iranian respect for lineage, so that the future Saviour had necessarily to be of the prophet's own blood. This had the consequence that, despite the story of the Saosyant's miraculous conception, there was no divinisation of him, and no betrayal therefore of Zoroaster's teachings about the part which humanity has to play in the salvation of the world. The Saviour will be a man, born of human parents. "Zoroastrianism... attributes to man a distinguished part in the great cosmic struggle. It is above all a soteriological part, because it is man who has to win the battle and eliminate evil".22

Saosyant, although thus fully representing humanity, is not only miraculously conceived but is accompanied, like his father, by divine grace, by Khvaramah (Khwariz).23 and it is in Yasht 19, which celebrates Khvaramah, that the extant Avesta has most to tell of him: "We sacrifice to the mighty... kingly Glory... which will accompany the victorious Saosyant and also (his) other comrades, so that he may make wonderful (fraša-) existence, not ageing, not dying, not decaying, not rotting, ever-living, ever-benefiting, powerful..." (vv. 88-89). "When Astvatarata comes out from the Kašaoya water, messenger of Mazdā Ahura, son of Vispataurvari, brandishing the victorious weapon which the mighty Thraetaona bore when Aži Dahāka was slain, which the Tūra Frarejsanya bore when the wicked Zāmigu was slain, which Kavi Haosravah bore when the Tūra Frarejsanya was slain, which Kavi Vīštāspa bore to avenge Aša upon the enemy host, then will he drive the Drug out from the world of Aša. He will gaze with the eyes of wisdom, he will behold all creation... he will gaze with the eyes of sacrifice upon the whole corporeal world, and heedfully will he make the whole corporeal world undying. His comrades—those of the victorious Astvatarata—advance, thinking well, speaking well, acting well, of good conscience (daēna-); and they will utter no false word with their tongues. Before them will flee Wrath of the bloody club, ill-fortuned. Aša will conquer the wicked Drug, hideous, murky. Aka Manah will also be overcome, Vohu Manah overcomes him. Overcome will be the falsely-spoken (word), the truly-spoken word overcomes it... Haurvatat and Amaerat will overcome both hunger and thirst. Haur vatat and Amaerat will overcome wicked hunger and thirst. Agra Mainyu doing evil works will flee, bereft of power" (vv. 92-96).

These verses show admirably how the Zoroastrian concept of the future Saviour was brought into relationship with the ancient heroic tales of the "Avestan" people, so that Astvatarata is seen as the culmination of a line of valiant warriors, all of whom had fought bravely and victoriously against some great evil, embodied in man or beast. It is striking too that this development evidently took place relatively early, before Frarejsanya was himself debased into being a representative of evil,24 and apparently before the legend evolved that Aži Dahāka is not dead but fettered, awaiting the last battle. (This makes it increasingly improbable that there is an Indo-European connection between the Iranian myth of the fettered Aži Dahāka and the Norse one of the fettered Loki; and it seems likely that the Iranian myth is a product of late Zoroastrian scholasticism, which evolved a pattern whereby all representatives of the powers of evil will be gathered again for their final defeat at the end of the world.) As well as being a fighting hero, the last of warriors, the Saosyant, "who will bring benefit (sāvāk-) to the whole corporeal world"25 is also a priest, as befits a son of Zoroaster, and looking "with the eyes of sacrifice" upon creation, he will consecrate it anew and restore it to immortality.

Since Astvatarata represents the "high point of fulfillment of the human

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19 Yt. 19.92; Vd. 19.5.
20 Yt. 13.62; cf. Gādā. XXXV.66 (BTA, 301-3).
21 See above, p. 235.
22 Mādē, Cdr., 395.
23 Yt. 19.89.
24 sadhvaj daēnas (v. 94), on which see Humbach, IF LXIII. 1957, 43 n. 7.
26 Yt. 13.129.
race", each section of the long list of male asavan in the Farvardin Yast ends with an invocation of his fravasi (Yl. 13.110, 117, 128). The sum of the fravasis which have been born on earth is comprehended in the expression "all the fravasis of the asavan from Gayā-marstan to Saôšyant" (Yl. 13.145). The Avestan texts know no individual Saôšyant, so called other than Astvat.arata. Yl. 19.95 refers, however, to his comrades; and six names which precede his in Yl. 13.128 are explained in the Pahlavi Dadestān i diri as those of his coadjuditors who will fulfill his work in the six keśvars that encircle Khvaniratha. Darmesteter, who first drew attention to this passage, pointed out that the names of the six in fact show a symmetrical correspondence with the six keśvars, appearing in formal pairs in the same way. The two lists are as follows:

| Raoças.caēšman | Arzahī | Hvara.caēšman | Savah | Frādat.khvāronah | Frādat.dafシュ | Vidhat.khvāronah | Vidhat.dafシュ | Vouru.namah | Vouru.barashṭī | Vouru.savah | Vouru.jarashṭī |

As Darmesteter says, the correspondences between the names are not so close that one can be sure that those of the six heroes of the Farvardin Yast were evolved simply to represent the six keśvars; but the remarkable symmetry of the last two pairs makes this very probable, for "it was very much in the spirit of Mazdeism that, having a Saôšyant in Khvaniratha, one should provide him with representatives in the six other keśvars". This is the spirit, however, of later scholasticism, rather than of the early gospel of Zoroaster.

Between these six names and that of the Saôšyant himself occur two others, Ukhsyat.arata and Ukhsyat.namah, meaning respectively "He who makes righteousness grow", and "He who makes reverence grow". These names, like the six preceding ones, appear to have been added by a later tradition, whereby was evolved the myth of two earlier Saôsyants, brothers of Astvat.arata. To match the three in Yl. 13.142, at the end of a list of the fravasis of asavan women, appear three names, of which the last one is Frādat.ofシュ, "she who brings fulfilment to the father". This was evidently coined to express his owner's part in bearing Zoroaster's son to complete his mission, for she is the virgin-mother of the Saôšyant, Astvat.arata; because of her son's role, she is also known as Vispa.taunvarī, "she who conquers all". The two names which precede hers, and which are plainly modelled on it (somewhat awkwardly, as to both grammar and sense) are Srvat.ofシュ "she who has a famous father", and Vaghru.ofシュ "she who has a good father". Such imitative names could naturally be introduced into the ancient text at any time, by any priest with a modest knowledge of Avestan. The full-blown legend, as it is preserved in the Pahlavi books, is as follows: Zoroaster thrice approached his third wife, Hvōdi. "Each time the seed fell upon the ground. The yasad Neryōsang took the light and power of that seed and entrusted them to the yasad Anāhid to guard... and 99,999 fravasis of the just are appointed for their protection, so that the dēs may not destroy them". The seed thus given to the yasad of the waters is preserved in Lake Kayānsh (Kāshān), where "even now are seen three lamps glowing at the bottom of the lake"; and in the course of time each of these three virgins named in Yl. 13.142 will bathe there and conceive a son by the prophet, and each of these three sons will have his share in furthering the work of redemption. The first two virgins are both said to be descended from Isadvatšar, Zoroaster's eldest son by his first wife—a further indication of the artificiality of the elaborated legend. This development introduces the characteristic Zoroastrian feature of khvātavdāyla.

The tradition of the coming Saviours, thus triplicated, is set in a framework of cosmic history, whereby "limited time" was identified with a "world year" divided into periods of 1000 years each. It is generally held that this concept of the world year is to be attributed to Babylonian speculation concerning recurrent "great years" repeating themselves monotonously throughout time. In considering this development of the legend one enters therefore into the historical period of the faith, after it

27 Nyberg, Rel., 306. The fact that the human race begins with Gayā-marstan and ends with the Saôsyant is, however, no reason for identifying these two beings, remote from one another in nature as well as time. The attempt has nevertheless been made by more than one scholar. See most recently E. Abegg, "Urmensch und Mensch bei den Iranerländern", Anahita-Studien, 1960, 1-6, with references to earlier essays in this direction.
29 See his Ed. iranianus II, 206-8.
30 Ibid., 207-8.
had been adopted in western Iran. The Zoroastrian texts vary as to how many millennia make up the world-year. Some give the figure as seven (three times three being a favoured Zoroastrian number); others as twelve, corresponding to the twelve months of the natural year and the twelve signs of the zodiac.\(^\text{45}\) There are, however, grounds for thinking that the original figure was rather 6000 years,\(^\text{46}\) a figure which was increased to 9000 or 12,000 as scholastics elaborated the scheme. Certainly it is only within the last 6000 years that any events are represented as taking place upon this earth.\(^\text{47}\) The full scheme of the 12,000-year period, as preserved in the \textit{Bundāšn}, is as follows: During the first 3000 years Ohrmazd became aware of Ahriman; and knowing through his omniscience of the struggle which must be, he then created his creation in the \textit{mēnding} state. Ahriman, afflicted always with belated knowledge, became aware in his turn of Ohrmazd, and "because of his desire to hurt and his malicious nature"\(^\text{48}\) attacked him and his creation. His onslaught was in vain, and he "rushed back to darkness and misconceived many \textit{đēs}, the destroyers of creation".\(^\text{49}\) Ohrmazd then offered peace, which his malignant adversary refused; whereas Ohrmazd proposed a time for contest between them "in the state of Mixture" (\textit{pad gumnēsīn}),\(^\text{50}\) namely the following 9000 years. To this Ahriman, not able to foresee the outcome, agreed, and a pact was made between them (which is duly watched over by Mēr, lord of the covenant).\(^\text{51}\) Accordingly during the second 3000 years Ohrmazd established his creation physically, \textit{pad gētī},\(^\text{52}\) and at the beginning of the third set of three millennia, that is, in the 6000th year, Ahriman attacked, bringing death and evil into the world. "But foreseeing this Ahura Mazda has already at the beginning of the second period created Zoroaster's \textit{frāvasī} ... and has thus initiated the act of salvation."\(^\text{53}\) At the end of the third period the prophet is born in the \textit{gētī} state, and in the year 9000, the beginning of the fourth period, he receives the revelation of the Good Religion, and the final struggle for redemption is joined.\(^\text{48}\)

It is during this last period that the three \textit{Sōyants} (Saōyants), Zoroaster's sons, are born, towards the end of each millennium (10,000, 12,000, 14,000), each contributing to the process of redemption. The hope of a coming Saviour, thus tripled, appears to have become interwoven, however, with a quite different tradition, which probably existed in Iran in one form or another long before Zoroaster taught. This is a tradition, widely attested among different peoples of the world, that there had once been a golden age on earth, from which pinnacle of happiness and well-being mankind had thereafter steadily descended, to reach the troubles and sorrows of the present age. Such a tradition could readily be reconciled with the doctrine of the originally perfect creation of Ohrmazd, corrupted by Ahriman; but it conflicted with the fundamental optimism of Zoroastrianism, whereby after the prophet had received his revelation there should have been a steady spreading of knowledge of the Good Religion and hence of righteousness among mankind, and therefore a drawing near of \\textit{Fraōkārti}. No doubt, however, a prophetic literature existed earlier among the pagan Iranians which embodied the pessimistic tradition of a decline and fall—a tradition that embraced the legend of the golden age of Yima; and such is the tenacity of ancient Iran that in time Zoroastrian priests evolved a new prophetic literature of their own, in which the two world-views, pessimistic and optimistic, were reconciled in a pattern that repeated itself every thousand years during the fourth period of the world-year. This prophetic literature is best exemplified, among the surviving Pahlavi texts, in the \textit{Zand i Vahman Yašt} and the \textit{Jāmāsp Nāmag}, but has left its traces widely also in other works.\(^\text{47}\)

In the \textit{Vahman Yašt} the prophecy is represented as gained through...
vision (visionary literature is widely associated with prophecy among preliterate peoples). Zoroaster sees in a dream a tree from which seven branches grow, and this dream is interpreted for him in the following manner by Ohrmazd himself: "O Spitian Zardust, the tree whose trunk you have seen is the world which I, Ohrmazd, created; and the seven branches which you have seen are the seven times which will come. That of gold is the reign of King Vštâsp ... That of silver is the reign of Ardashîr the Kay, who is called Vahman, son of Spentôdâd ... That of copper is the reign of [Valakhî] the Arsacid king, who will remove from the world existing heresies ... That of brass is the reign of Ardashîr [the Sasanian] and [his son] king Shâhârzer, and Adûrbâd ... of the true religion. That of lead is the reign of king Vâhrâm Gôr, who will make apparent the spirit of joy. That of steel is the reign of king Khosrau, son of Kavâd ... That of iron is the vile rule of dêvês with disheveled hair, of the seed of Wrath. O Spitian Zardust, at the end of your millennium."

In the summary version of the prophecy preserved in the Dinâkh (on the authority of the lost Avestan Sûdgar Nâsk) there are only four times, of gold, silver, steel and iron. It seems that the tradition of four ages of metal, "which mark the progressive decline of humanity, was current in antiquity and that its origin is very old. It was accepted in Greece at the time of Hesiod, that is to say from the 8th century ..." It is possible that the association of the successive ages with metals in Iran was due to foreign, that is, Hellenistic influences, and that the enlarging of four ages to seven was similarly the result of alien contacts, in this case with Babylonian astrologers, who associated the "great years" with the seven planets, and hence produced a doctrine of seven "times."

In the elaborated scheme of the Vâhman Yâšt the three additional ages —copper, brass and lead— were inserted before the grim iron age of the present, which for the redactors of the Pahlavi works was the time of foreign rule, of the overlordship of the Wrath-begotten Arabs. Whatever divergences in detail, the general pattern of the prophecy is the same in all versions, that of a slow but steady decline, age by age, in both standards of human life and conditions of the surrounding world, a decline which is on occasion checked but never wholly arrested by the actions of noble and heroic men. The final age of iron will not only be the "basest of times" for mankind, but will see the earth itself contracting, crops failing, rains lessening and animals growing stunted.

This sombre prophecy belongs to a well-known category of ancient literature, which has been termed "prophetic history", that is, history foretold by someone, usually a seer or divine being, who is represented as speaking long before the events described took place. The history itself "as a rule consists largely of a succession of kings", but there are also "curiously widespread prophecies relating to an elemental catastrophe, sometimes connected with the end of the world."

The prophetic tradition of pagan Iran, belonging to this general type, was adapted to Zoroastrian optimism and fitted into the pattern of the "world year" in the following way: the time of Creation was one of pure goodness, and so the first 6000 years of "limited time" passed first in mînôg and then in gëllîg state, constitute the golden age. Then Ahirman attacks, and an evil time begins. At the end of the first millennium (c. 7000) Jam (Yima) departs this life, and conditions grow ever more miserable under the misrule of Dahiëk (Aûh Dähäka). 1000 years later Dahiëk is overcome by Frédôn (Thraëtaona), and thereafter there is an upward movement again, culminating, at the end of this 3000-year period, in the birth of Zoroaster, who was 30 years old in the year 9000.

During the next 3000 years this pattern of initial goodness, degeneration and restoration repeats itself broadly three times, giving ample opportunities for both prophecies of woe and messages of hope. Thus the "millennium of Zoroaster" (9000-10,000) begins gloriously with the revelation of the Good Religion to the prophet in his 30th year; but after this golden time other ages follow in progressive stages of decline, down to the iron age of the present with all its moral and cosmic evils. Towards the end of this 1000-year period there will come a rescuer in the shape of Peştôtan,

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44 See Chadwick, Growth of Literature III, 846 f.
45 ZV Y 1, IV 3 (BTA, 17/100).
47 Chadwick, Growth of Literature III, 846 f.
48 Ibid., 846 f.
49 It is noteworthy that in GVR, XXXIII, 112 f. (BTA, 275 f.), in a chapter devoted to the calamities of each millennium, there is no mention of the four (or seven) "times" of the 9th millennium, but simply a straightforward catalogue of disasters.
son of Kay Vištasp, who had received the gift of immortality, and thus introduces the leitmotiv of a future saviour born of a man who had lived when the faith was new. Peštân, with 150 righteous men, will restore order and the faith, being aided in his struggle by certain of the yazadš—Neróṣang and Sróṣ, Mihr, Rašn, Vahrám, Aštád and Khwarr.68 The world being thus cleansed again by him, as it had been earlier by Frédon for Zoroaster, the way is prepared for the birth of Zoroaster's son, the first Sōšt, Ušđar (Ukhštš. ar.sta). He too is 30 years old when his millennium begins in the year 10,000. He will restore the revelation brought by Zoroaster, and all creation will flourish for three blessed years, the wolf-species will disappear, and for ten days the sun will stand still at noon as it did in the time of Creation.61 By the end of this millennium there is degeneration again—either a coming of enemies to Iran to oppress the state and suppress the Religion,62 or a great and terrible winter in which man and beast will perish.63 This is the winter of Malēš, called after Avestan Maheša, the "Destroyer", which is the terrible winter which drove Yima into the war.64 With events now coming full cycle, Yima's war will be opened again towards the end of the 11th millennium and the world repopulated from it, to create a new golden age for the birth of the second Sōšt, Ušđarmah (Ukhštšt. namah).65 Again he will be 30 years old when the new millennium dawns in 11,000; but this time the world is blessed for six years and the sun stands still for twenty days, bhraštās perish, and men, growing gentler, eat only vegetables, and finally live only by drinking water.66 But once again there will be a resurgence of evil. Az Dāhāk, fettered at the end of the 8th millennium, will break his bonds and ravage the world, devouring men and beasts, and smiting water, fire and plants;67 but Karāšš (Karōššapā) will rise up to fight him,68 and Kay Khosrau (Kavi Hāosravah) and his comrades, who have been sleeping, will also join in the battle.69 The way is thus prepared for the birth of the third Saviour, known in the Pahlavi books simply as the Sōšt, who will be born 57 years before the dawn of Frāṣegird.70 (The figure 57 is apparently made up of the 30 years allotted to each of the Saviours, as to Zoroaster himself, before he embarks on his great work, followed by thrice nine, or 27 years, an auspicious number for bringing about Frāṣegird.) The Sōšt's guide will be Arīyan;71 and the sun will still stand for him for 30 days.72 Thereafter will come the last battle, and the Resurrection. The latter will begin with the raising up of Gayōmar,73 and when the bodies of all men have been raised up and reunited with their souls, there will take place the "assembly of Isādštāš",74 that is, the assembly presided over by the eldest son of Zoroaster, who is thus associated with the work of his youngest and greatest brother. The Last Judgment will take place, the earth be cleansed of evil, and Frāṣegird be established, so that "the world shall be immortal for ever and ever".75 This finished scheme of cosmic history, presented by the Pahlavi books of the 9th century A.C., evidently received its final touches after the Sasanian period. In it the simple grandeur of Zoroaster's own vision of the "three times", with, during the second time, revelation, the spread of the religion and the coming of the Sōšt, has provided the basic pattern; but this pattern has been heavily elaborated and overlaid. The creation of a detailed chronology appears to have encouraged the proliferation of persons and events to fill the empty millennia; and it is probable that the repetitiveness of this added matter again owed something to the influence of the Babylonian concept of the "great year". The Babylonians believed in the eternity of the world, and thought that the ceaseless influences of the planets brought it about that "at the end of a long cycle of years... identical phenomena would repeat themselves down endless ages. A race like our own would be reborn, and individuals endowed with

the same qualities would accomplish exactly the same acts. At the end of
one 'great year' another 'great year' would begin, which would exactly
reproduce the preceding ones'. This is broadly true of the successive
millennia of the 6000 years of Zoroastrian cosmic history; but the fusion
of orthodox doctrine with what seems to have been an originally pagan
prophetic tradition caused the repetitive events to be arranged there in a
particular pattern, with what is good being ever corrupted and ever again
restored. The incorporation of stories of heroes of old, seen as playing their
part in the great struggle against evil, together with allusions to men and
events of the Sasanian period, adds to the complexity; and there is
further elaboration due to the wish to emphasise that Fravagird is a return
to the beginning, so that all great things which have once been known will
come again. The general impression which one receives is that the final
exposition is the product of long transmission and much re-working in
priestly schools, where the learned drew on ancient traditions, but fitted
these into new moulds and modified them in the light of later events, and
so gradually created a harmonious whole. Memorisation of this must have
been helped by the recurring patterns of events, so that the incidents of
one millennium could be related to what went before and after. The
growth and elaboration of this scheme can be traced from the Younger
Avesta down to the Pahlavi books of the 9th century A.C.—a span of
perhaps 2000 years. It began, that is, when Zoroastrian literature was
orally cultivated and mnemonic patterns were important, and was not
completed until after a written culture had been largely established.
Once fashioned, it was continually studied and taught by priests; and
European travellers still learnt of it verbally from Zoroastrians in Iran in
the 17th century A.C. How far the details of the elaborated scheme
entered into popular consciousness is, however, doubtful. The Persian epic
tells of the 1000-year reign of the evil Dahâk, but with regard to the
future the hope of ordinary people seems to have been fixed on the coming
of the one Sôsyant, who will be mightily helped, it is believed, by Vahrâm,
yazad of Victory. There is no general awareness that thereafter, ac-

88 Czegledy, K., "Bahrain: Cohin and the Persian apocalyptic literature", Acta
89 See further in Vol. II.
90 The Sasanian Khândûdû Majûg, the source of the Persian Shâhânmâ, was, however,
itself the work of priets; see this Handbook, I.IV, p. 58 with n. 2.
91 For the part played by Vahrâm at the end of the 10th millennium (i.e., the present one)
see ZYI, VIII, (ed. RAS, 69-70/115). On the blending of beliefs in Vahrâm, god of Victory,
with heroic legends of "King Vâram" see Czegledy, art. cit.; and the little Pahlavi text ed.
by Jammâl-asâz, Pahlavi Texts, 160-1, and transcribed and translated by H. W. Bailey,
Zoroastrian Studies, 1956.

81 See, at length, the imaginative study by S. K. Eddy, The King is Dead, Studies in
CHAPTER TWELVE
THE LAWS OF PURITY

Just as belief in the coming Saviour, although so much elaborated in the tradition, has its source in Zarooner’s own teachings, so the many observances designed to maintain purity, although extended and codified down the centuries, are also rooted in his doctrines; for the linking of spiritual and material in the Gāthās has the logical consequence that, even as righteousness helps to bring about individual and cosmic salvation on the mēnōk plane, so purity and cleanliness, being a caring for the seven creations in their gētig state, also helps to achieve Fraēgīrd. These creations had been brought into being by Ahura Mazda fair and unblemished; and all that sullies his handiwork—dirt and disease, rust, tarnish, mould, stench, blight, decay—is a part of the weaponry of Acura Mainyu, as is the final blow of death. To reduce or banish any of these, therefore, is to contribute, however humbly, to the defence of the good creation, and its ultimate redemption. This basic doctrine is simple and attractive, and it involves every member of the community in fighting the good fight unceasingly through the ordinary tasks of daily life. This is one of the great strengths of Zaroonerianism. The teaching developed many ramifications, however, as generations of priests elaborated codes of conduct in support of it, relating to both actual and ritual cleanliness. Some of the existing regulations probably have their remote origin in Indo-Iranian times, since the Brahmins have similar prescriptions relating to cultic purity; but Zaroonerian rules regarding daily living can be shown to have proliferated down the centuries, and they created eventually an iron code of conduct which had the effect of raising a barrier between Zaroonerian and unbeliever almost as rigid as that which separates the caste Hindu from the rest of humanity. In this code observance was fused with morality, the belief being that “all actions and ways of behaving are either meritorious or sinful”, two neutral areas being recognized. There thus persisted in many respects the old Indo-Iranian concept of the nature of transgression, as something to be defined in religious rather than in solely ethical terms. The existence of the developed Zaroonerian code must have contributed to the failure of the Good Religion to gain converts beyond Iranian borders; for in its stringency it makes demands of a kind to which it is better to grow accustomed from earliest childhood, so that acceptance of them becomes instinctive. Otherwise the requirements may well seem too irksome, the self-discipline needed too strict. As it is said in a Persian Rināyāt: “A non-Zaroonerian is not naturally fit for observing the precautions about purity.” Since Zaroonerian paganism must have known some of the same rules, the difficulty would have been less for Iranian converts.

In the absence of any early Avestan text concerning such matters, it is impossible to determine which were the original observances of the faith, which later extensions; but since the basic usages must be primal, originating in paganism and strongly reinforced by Zarooner’s teachings, it seems justifiable to treat the whole subject in the present chapter, even though most of the sources are late. The main Avestan one is the Vendīdād, which deals only with certain of the purity laws; but much additional material can be gathered from various Pahlavi and Persian works, notably the Pahlavi commentary on the Vendīdād, the Sāyest ne-Sāyest with its supplementary texts, the Pahlavi Rināyāt accompanying the Dādestān ī dinīg, the Arādāy Virâs Nāmâg, the Pahlavi Rināyāts of Aḏurfarban and Farbag-Srōs, and the Persian Rināyāts of post-Sasanian times. (All the rināyāts, so named in Muslim times, consist of the disjointed treatment of a number of religious matters, often in the traditional form of question and answer; and they usually deal with matters of observance rather than doctrine.) Moreover, both the Iranis and Parsis, living as they did in small and in the main isolated communities down to the 19th century, kept the purity laws generally until then, and a number of the ancient regulations are still observed today by the strictly orthodox. This fact makes it possible to study the working of these laws in the living practice of the faith, so that it can be seen how they support spiritual aspirations and moral endeavour, and are themselves a part of the godliness of the devout—of the threefold code thus enjoined in a Pahlavi text: “Men ought to discharge these three duties every day: to ward off the demon of defamation..., to profess the faith, and to perform meritorious acts.”

The purity laws derive their strength from their firm doctrinal basis,

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1 Since the purity laws are set out repeatedly, and sometimes in works which can be dated, it is possible occasionally to trace the process of elaboration. For one small instance see the Farīsyyā Namā of Daftar Dārdāb Pahlān (early 18th century), ed. J. J. Modī, 50 n. 4.
4 This provides a valuable corrective to an attitude commonly taken towards the purity laws by European scholars, who, finding them ungenial, have treated them as alien to “true” Zaroonerianism, the product merely of a limited phase of clerical tyranny (usually assigned, because of the date of the final redaction of the Vendīdād, to the Parthian period).
that is, Zoroaster's dualistic concept of the world as a place of unremitting conflict between goodness, of which purity is a part, and evil, by which that goodness and purity are constantly threatened. Further, the right course of conduct in defence of what is good and pure is codified in relation to the prophet's fundamental teachings about the seven creations. With regard to the inanimate creations, nothing impure should be allowed in contact with them. Metal, the substance of the sky, is to be kept free from rust and tarnish, to shine in beauty and use; and precious metal should not be put into corrupt hands, but as far as possible be given only to the good (this rule is especially to be observed in acts of charity). The lowly earth is to be tilled and cared for, and kept free from all unclean matter. The chief precautions are, however, those to be taken with regard to the vulnerable and deeply venerated elements of fire and water, which are also objects of the Zoroastrian cult; and concerning these there are certain complexities of observance which set adherents of the Good Religion apart from all other men. Water is generally regarded by mankind as a natural cleansing agent; but for the Zoroastrian, the creation of Haurvatāt, must itself be kept pure, and hence to use it to wash away dirt is an impurity. This cannot be interpreted rigorously in all exigencies of daily life, for, as the dāstūrs said resignedly, "In this world we cannot live without sinfulness"; but certain restrictions are carefully observed. Thus no impure objects, such as excrement, or blood-soaked cloths, or worst of all, a dead body, are allowed to come into contact with a natural source of water, such as lake, stream or well; and nothing ritually unclean is washed there. Instead water is drawn off for this purpose, to limit the pollution; and this then is not used immediately, but only after what is impure has first been cleansed with something else. The general disinfectant and cleansing agent which is initially applied is cow's urine, with its ammonia content. This is known in Middle Persian either as gōmēz, the literal term, or as pādyāh, meaning perhaps "against water", that is, what is interposed between impurity and water. The fact that the Hindus regard all products of the cow as pure and cleansing suggests that this practice may be Indo-Iranian. In certain cases dry sand or dust is also used, either by itself or, in cases of extreme pollution, after the cleansing by gōmēz, as a further barrier between the contamination and the final washing with water. One of the sinners whom Ardāv Virāz saw in deepest hell was a man who in life had often washed in "standing waters and fountains and streams", thus distressing Hordād; and it was reported that one of the Sasanian kings was overthrown by the Zoroastrian priests for building bath-houses, "as they cared more for the cleanliness of water than for their own". The comment is, however, unjust. Man must keep himself scrupulously clean, for he also is part of the creation of Ohrmazd; but when he is unclean he should not plunge recklessly into the clean element of water, forgetting his duty as steward of this world.

With regard to fire, the general practice of using it to burn up rubbish is unthinkable for the Zoroastrian, who lays only clean, dry wood and pure offerings upon the flames, and who when using fire to cook takes great care not to let anything spill or drop on to it from the pots. It was because of his failure to protect the fire when his cook-pot overturned that Karāsāspa was accused of sin by Ardvāhīst (Asa Vahīsta) and shut out from Paradise. Rubbish has therefore to be disposed of in other ways. Dry and "clean" waste-matter (such as sun-bleached bones) may be buried. Otherwise an Irani custom has been for each community to erect a lard, a small building with no access except a narrow chimney-like opening in the flat roof, to which steps lead up. Contaminating rubbish is dropped down this opening, and when a certain amount has accumulated acid is poured in to consume it away.

With regard to the living creations of plants and animals also, certain fundamental doctrines need to be grasped in order to understand the working of the purity laws. The world was seen from an anthropocentric point of view, and in the light of the doctrine that for plant, beast and man perfection lay in healthy maturity. The immature being was growing towards that point at which the prototype of its species had been created by Ohrmazd, before birth and death were known; hence for a Zoroastrian

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8 Riv. Univ. 1 81 15-76, Dhabhar, 77.
9 For the widespread use among diverse people of urine as a cleanser see, e.g., A History of Technology (ed. C. Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall and T. I. Williams), 11, Oxford 1956, pp. 215, 355, 368. Of the Iranians Agathas observed, (ll. 24, Clem, 101): "They reverence water more than anything else, even to the extent of not washing their faces in it and of refraining from touching it except to drink it and use it on their plants". The custom of using gōmēz for the early morning ablutions was general among the Parises down to the mid-7th century.
10 See Darmesteter, SBE IV, 2nd ed., lxxvi with n. 4 (citing Joshua Stylites).
11 See Darmesteter, SBE IV, 2nd ed., lxxvi with n. 4 (citing Joshua Stylites).
12 See Pahl. Riv. Ed., XXXVII.6 (ed. Dhabhar, 115-6). In P 2.7.3.4 it is laid down that if a man deliberately burns carrion on a fire, he should be killed on the spot. The Pahl. commentary adds that brigand, sodomeite and criminal taken in the act may also be dealt with summarily, thus setting such wicked people together.
13 See above, pp. 102-03 with n. 113.
14 This custom still prevails in the Yazdi area. How far it was general it is impossible to tell.
it is a sin against Amurdiid, lord of plants, to cut down a sapling tree, a sin against Yavman, lord of animals, to kill a lamb or calf. Each "good" plant or animal must be helped to grow to its perfection. Therefore, inevitably, "crooked eclipses" against its glory fight", and Ahriman will in the end claim victory through death—but not before plant or beast has been able to make its own small contribution to the cosmic struggle.

What constitutes a "good" plant or animal is assessed solely on the basis of what is useful or agreeable to man. All that is aggressive or repulsive is classed as daēvie; and in time a whole double vocabulary developed for good and evil creatures, with regard to parts of the body and essential acts of life, such as moving, seeing, speaking etc.—a usage of which there is no trace in the Gāthās. Daēvic creatures were naturally considered as unclean in themselves, and to slay them was a positive merit; for there is no sin in bringing death to the creatures of him who created death. The generic Avestan term for them, khrafstra, used by the prophet himself, occurs in Middle Iranian as khrastar, or dialectically frestar, and in Zoroastrian Persian as kharastar, kharastar, khafastar. It was applied particularly to insects and reptiles, but could also be used of beasts of prey. One of the professional implementers of the Zoroastrian priest, according to the Vendidad, was the "khrastar-killer" (khrafstragan), which in Pahlavi is called the "snake-killer" (margan). This is described as "a stick with a piece of leather attached to the end... Everyone of the Good Religion should possess one, that he may strike and kill evil-working khrastars with it, very meritoriously." In the Pahlavi books "killing khrastars" is set on a plane with "caring for fire, according to the law"; for destroying such creatures amounted, in Zoroastrian eyes, to eliminat-

24 AVN XIV.11 (Asa-Haun, 39/165). In the Farziyat Nāma, Modi, 93/54, it is said that the Amelaspands asked Ardashir to return to earth in order "to preach the destruction of kharastars, because souls belonging to God are thereby saved, and bodies belonging to Ahriman are destroyed.


26 Information verbally from Arash J. Sorooshian of Kerman (whose grandmother remembered taking part in the observance as a child). For some European travellers' accounts of the "mental entity" felt by the Zoroastrians of Persia for kharastars see Darmesteter, ZA II, 212 n 3, 213 n. I; and further in Vol. III of the present work.

27 See Arnequèl du Forre, ZA II, 576 ff.; Modi, CC, 435.

28 For lists of "kharastars" see Riv., Unvala, 1727 ff.; Dhabhar, 268 ff. Farziyat Nāma, etc. Some of these diabolical creatures, such as the lion, seem to man noble in appearance, and the dastours explained that these were created by Ahriman on patterns established by Ohrmazd, whereas the repulsive ones he produced solely to his own designs (see Riv., Unvala, 1737-129; Dhabhar, 270). But "whatever kind of kharastars there are, it is necessary to kill" (Riv., Unvala, 1722 ff., Dhabhar, 260). There were, however, difficulties with respect to those kharastars from which man derived benefit, e.g. the silkworm and honey-bee. In their case it was said that Ohrmazd in his wisdom had created advantage, i.e. silk and honey, from Ahriman's evil creatures. These products could therefore be used. Nevertheless, cotton was better than silk "because cotton grows from the earth and is nourished by water and living honey, though generally perishable, destroyed a priest's ritual purity. See Riv., Unvala, 186-9; 18, 18, Dhabhar, 265 ff.; and on cotton cf. Māth. XVI 15 (West, 2515). Another instance of Ohrmazd's power to turn evil to good is that he exposes the demon winter to slay kharastars to the benefit of the spanda world (Dk. IV, 182-11-12, cited by Casaratti, Philosophy, 110).
of these by accident or wantonly, he had the duty to compensate by destroying many *khrafstars*, thus helping to preserve the dominion of the good creation. Moreover, since the destruction of *khrafstars* was good in itself, it might be performed generally, like any other good act, to compensate for both involuntary and deliberate transgressions. Hence "when one smites *khrafstars* one should always say: 'I smite and kill (them) for the sake of ridding myself of sin, for virtue and love of (my) soul.'"

Although all *daēnētic* creatures are regarded as unclean, the greatest uncleanness, and those which are therefore the subject of most of the purity laws, are disease and death, which inevitably affect the clean creation of Ohrmazd. What is newly dead, that is, newly conquered by Ahriman, is subject to Nasū, the she-demon of decay, who settles instantly on the body; and this is the chief single cause of pollution in the world. To bring any putrefying matter, nasā, into contact with one of the creations is accordingly a great sin; and in the *Vendidad* it is said that anyone who thus contaminates fire and water gives increased power to spiders and locusts, to fodderless drought and to winter with its deep snows, which slays cattle. Similarly he who, ignoring the ritual prescriptions for disposing of the dead matter of cut hair and nails, sullies the earth with these impure things, engenders there demons, and *khrafstars* that devour corn in granaries and clothing in cupboards. Since anything that has just died is in the highest degree unclean, no orthodox Zoroastrian will willingly touch even a dead fly with his bare hands; and to crush a large insect on the ground would be to contaminate Spandāmad. Zoroastrian villagers of Iran impale big-bodied beetles and the like with sharp splinters of bamboo, which they then thrust into mud walls, leaving the *khrafstar* to perish slowly in the air, out of contact with any of the seven creations. This usage, although undeniably cruel, is doctrinally justifiable, since the hapless creatures are regarded as diabolic; and it must be set against the disciplined care and often affection devoted to domestic animals of the good creation.

With dissipation dead matter ceases to be nasā, and is no longer regarded as contaminating. As it is said in the *Vendidad*, if this were not so, "how soon would all this material existence ... incur deadly sin, so numberless are the bodies which lie here upon the ground". With what is newly dead and decomposing there is a scale of banefulness which is at first sight paradoxical; for the most contaminating of all nasā is held to be the body of a righteous Zoroastrian priest, whereas that of an *āsmaengha*, a "deceiver of asa" or heretic, is no more polluting than the year-old dried-up carcase of a frog. The reason for this is again perfectly logical, given the doctrinal premisses. The *āsavān*, who purifies his own being through good thoughts, words and deeds, is both the cleanest of beings and the most powerful agent for cleansing the world around him. Through his prayers, as through those of the prophet himself, "purified will be the houses, purified the fire, purified the water, purified the earth, purified the cow, purified the plants, purified the righteous man, purified the righteous woman, purified the stars, purified the moon, purified the sun, purified the Endless Light, purified all Mazād-created things whose nature is from asa". To bring the impurity of death upon such a man Apara Mainyu needs to rally his forces in strength; and they, having triumphed, remain gathered around the body, radiating corruption. The sinful man, on the contrary, is already himself impure, a blight upon the creation of Sponta Mainyu; and a woman of evil life dries up waters by her mere gaze, and withers plants, and deprives the earth of strength, and the good man of much of his *sponta* power. Such wicked people should in theory

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15 See, e.g., *Vd.* 14.5 ff. The *Pahl. Riv. Dd.* XXII (ed. Dhabhar, 77) gives a table of the degrees of merit acquired by killing various *khrafstars*; and in *XXIIb* (Dhabhar, 101-3) are listed a few of the degrees of culpability incurred by killing creatures of the good creation.

16 *Sd.* III.21b (Tavasii, 60); see, e.g., *Sd.* VII.9, VIII.10 (Tavasii, 102, 113).


18 This is treated in detail in *Dd.* *Parsi* XVI.7 ff. (ed. Dhabhar, 36 ff.; transl. West, *SBE* XVIII, 30 ff.).


20 See *Vd.* 17; and on the bird *Ašrāwīna* above, p. 96. On the ritual see further the Pahl. commentary to *Vd.* 17; *Saddar Nafs* XIV (ed. Dhabhar, 13-14, transl. West, *SBE* XXIV, 275-60; *Suppl. texts to Sd.* XII.6 (Kotwal, 28); *Riv.* *Unvala*, I 244.7-11, 245.13-247.79; Dhabhar, 249-51; Farzandī Nāma (Moud 2770-41); J. M. Mould, "Two Iranian incantations for burying hair and nails", J. of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, VIII.3, 1905, 557-72. The act of having one's hair cut makes a person unclean, since some of the severed hairs inevitably touch the body.

21 *Vd.* 17, 2-3.
be slain by the righteous with as little compunction as kharafstars, for according to the Vendidad, until they are removed from the place of their abiding it will lack "fortune and plenty, healthiness, thriving and increase and growth, and the sprouting of corn and grasses". If, however, they are left to live their span, it is small trouble for Ahriman to overwhelm them, already impure, with the further impurity of death, and therefore little ménag evil attends their taking off. If one were to pursue the logic of this with rigour, one might indeed ask why the Evil One should ever remove through death such useful allies; but perhaps the answer would be that he, like the ancient lord of the underworld, needs to people his realm of hell. The theologians had after all to reconcile their doctrines with the facts of natural processes.

Another doctrinally difficult matter was to harmonize the teachings about death with the meritoriousness of the blood sacrifice; for here the particular tenets of Zoroastrianism had to be reconciled with ancient devotional practice. In this case the Gordian knot was cut simply by formulating the doctrine that the flesh of gosfand or beneficent animals, i.e. of those creatures which were killed through sacrifice for food, was not nasåd but "clean" — a doctrine which accords with natural human assumptions and which (as far as can be judged from the surviving texts) was merely stated, not argued. The meritoriousness of the blood sacrifice is assumed in the Vendidad itself, where in one passage it is enjoined that for a particularly heinous offence a man should compensate by sacrificing a thousand gosfand, and making offerings therefrom to fire and water.

Edible gosfand apart, the force of compulsory power in death was worked out by the Zoroastrian scholastics down the scale of the "good" animal kingdom. The creature nearest to man in dignity and worth is the dog; and a dog's body is accordingly almost as contaminating as that of a righteous man. Even to see one, as to see the corpse of an åx¥¥¥¥, without due ritual precautions, robs the beholder of purity. It is possible to find rational and historical grounds for the Zoroastrian regard for the dog. The herd-dog and watch-dog, which head the list of canine species in the Vendidad, must have been man's valued helpers in ancient times on the steppes; and with his qualities of loyalty, obedience and affection the dog undoubtedly seems to have a moral nature, and the capacity of choice. "Respect for the dog" (irthêm-saag), so constantly inculcated by Zoroastrians, has thus a reasonable basis; but the part assigned to the dog in religious life, and in the rituals of purification, goes beyond the rational, and leads one to mysterious beliefs connected with the spirit world. Whether these have their origin in myths about the dogs that guard the ways of death it is difficult to tell; but the facts are that orthodox Zoroastrians not only regard the dog as a clean and righteous creature, to feed and care for which is meritorious; they also consider that food given to a dog in the name of someone who has died will nourish that person in the hereafter. Moreover, a dog's gaze is held to be purifying, in that it drives off demons. A dog is therefore regularly present at the great purification of the bârâhóm, and the sagid, the ceremony of being "seen by the dog" is always enacted with a corpse. Indeed it is said to be rash and highly sinful for anyone to touch a corpse before sagid has been performed to lessen the infection. Among the other precautions taken with regard to dead persons is that Avesta is always recited, including invariably the Srôb bâj, which embodies the Gathic Rîm-nâ Mazdâ, and is excellent for "smiting Nasus" (sadâm i Nasus). Physical measures taken against the evil of death include placing the body on a dry and non-conducting surface.

44 Vd. 1:17 ff. 45 See the Parzijal Nâma, Modi, 20-173-1. The phrase irthêm-saag can often be heard among orthodox Irani villagers, used, for instance, to admonish a boy who looks as if he might be about to cough or kick a dog.
46 Vd. above, p. 193. 47 See Vd. p. 193. 48 Pak. Vd. 9.32. 49 BTA, Bombay 1949, 245. 50 See Vd. 8.37-8, and see Modi, CC, 115 ff. 51 See Vd. 8.10-18, where it is enjoined that the dog should be "four-eyed" (like the dogs of Yena, see above, p. 149), or white with yellow ears. The former kind is interpreted as being a black dog with two flecks over its eyes, which, pace Jackson, Persia past and present, 78 m is by no means an uncommon type in Iran, at least in the Yazdi area. Any other kind of dog will, however, serve at need for the sagid, see Std. 1:2, and ff. (Tavand, 30-2) concerning the sagid in general. See also at length Pak. Riv., Univ. 110, 15 ff.; Dhabhar, 112 ff.; and for current observance Modi, CC, 23 ff.; Jackson, op. cit., 390. 52 For discussions see Tavand, Riv., intro., 16-18; A. Kammerhuber, ZDMG CVIII, 1956, 300-1. 53 See, e.g., Std. 11, 93-95: X.33 (Tavand, 33-144): Riv., Univ. 114, 4-5; Dhabhar, 164. 54 See Pak. Riv., Univ. 1 111-15; Dhabhar, 113. 55 See Vd. 8.14; Riv., Univ. 110-7-15; Dhabhar, 112. Some of the orthodox villagers in the Yazdi area bury a dog with a hot stone and sand. 56 Riv., Univ. 1 999-9; Dhabhar, 376. On the texts of the Srôb bâj see above, p. 273 n. 99.
such as sand or stone.57 Lines or kal are then drawn round it to keep the contamination in (as lines are drawn round the path or sacred precinct to keep contamination out).58 A fire is kept alight there, but not nearer than three paces, for its own protection; and fragrant substances such as sandalwood and frankincense are burnt on it—for sweet odours belong to the good creation and help to repel evil. Avesta is recited continually, and two people keep watch by the body until it can be carried to the place of exposure. It is constantly stipulated that no one should touch or lift a corpse alone.59 There must always be two persons, and they should make paivand, i.e. establish contact with one another, usually by holding a cord or piece of cloth between them.60 Priests also make paivand in various ways at certain points during the sacred ceremonies, and the underlying intention is presumably the same, to reinforce the spanda power of one good person with that of another, in the one case to make worship more effective, in the other to give added strength in the face of evil. Contact is in general very important in ritual matters. If a pure person has even indirect contact with an impure person or object, his purity is vitiated, the baleful influence running like a current between them. The gaze of the eyes can in extreme cases create this contact;61 and an exchange of words between a clean and unclean person could also, it was held, contaminate the former, though if the utterance were only one-sided it would not.62

One of the most impure groups of persons were naturally the professional corpse-bearers, called in the Vendidad nasa-kala,63 but in later usage nasa-salar ("master of the corpse"). In the Vendidad it is enjoined that these men should do their work naked,64 evidently to reduce contamination; but it seems unlikely that this injunction was literally intended or ever wholly obeyed. In known usage the corpse is laid on an iron bier, called gah-ahan "throne of iron", metal being chosen as less apt than wood to harbour contagion,65 and the nasa-salar keep special clothes to be worn only for their work, and washed thereafter with gomis and water. They also cover their hands with cloths; and when they put off these professional garments they wash themselves from head to foot with gomis and water, before returning to their homes. They must moreover recite a certain number of Avestan prayers during their work, for their own protection. Nevertheless, however many precautions the nasa-salar takes to limit contamination, the fact that he is necessarily and continually in contact with nasa makes it inevitable that other members of the community should shrink a little from him, as people shrink from someone with an infectious disease. Communal behaviour towards the nasa-salar has probably varied considerably at different places and times, but in known practice he is not allowed, while actively employed, to approach sacred fire or shrine (though he may do so, if after giving up his work he undergoes the greatest of the purifications and becomes clean again). He is not welcome on auspicious occasions, such as initiations and marriages; and though in some communities he is allowed to attend the gahambar feasts, from which no Zoroastrian should ever be turned away, he is then served his food apart, having brought his own cloth and utensils with him.66 Often, however, even at these great festivals food is simply sent to his home—in generous quantity, for he is an essential and in his own way a valued member of the community. At home too he eats apart, from separate vessels, avoiding paivand with his family;67 and he does not himself tend the hearth fire, or light a lamp, but asks someone else to do these things for him.68 Nor is it desirable that he should till the soil, thereby bringing uncleanness upon Spendarmad. The calling thus imposes many restrictions, and has been usually undertaken, one would imagine, because of poverty and need. Nevertheless, a devout man can find pride in it, being as it were a soldier in the front of battle, exposing himself but by rigorous care protecting from evil both the creations and his fellow-believers.

With such beliefs one might have thought that, when circumstances

57 Illustrations of two types of iron bier, given in one of the Persian ruins, are reproduced by D. Menaert, Conferences au Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque de l'Institut 1910, 176, 153.
58 On the isolation of the nasa-salar in the Iranian community see Jackson, op. cit., 372. Such practice was maintained in, for example, Shiraz in Iran down to the 1960's, though some urban communities (e.g. Karachi) had relaxed such usage several decades earlier.
59 This again is Sharifabad observance.
60 These restrictions were almost certainly general, but are particularly recorded of Navar (in the unpublished notebooks of E.A. Phirozeshah M. Kotwal, early 20th century, for knowledge of which I am indebted to his grandson, Dr. Firoze Kotwal).
permitted, Zoroastrians would readily have employed *juddins*, that is, those of another faith, who in their eyes were already unclean, to dispose of corpses; but this is in fact strictly forbidden, on the ground that unbelievers, who do not observe the laws of purity, might, having performed this task, carelessly approach water and fire without first cleansing themselves; and this would be a sin for which the Zoroastrians, employing them, would be responsible. Better, therefore, that they should take the contamination on themselves, and carefully control it.\(^{46}\)

The other chief cause of pollution, apart from *nasā*, is all that leaves the living body, whether in sickness or in health, the bodily functions and malfunctions being alike regarded, it seems, as daebic in origin, perhaps since they are associated with change and mortality rather than with the static state of perfection. What issues from the body (not only excrement, but also blood, dead skin, cut nails and hair) is sometimes comprehended in the Pahlavi books under the term *hikhr*,\(^{28}\) and to allow *hikhr* to reach water or fire is no less heinous than to permit *nasā* to do so.\(^{37}\) With the logical elaboration of this doctrine, daily life became hedged about with regulations, some of which affect even its "good" aspects. Thus marriage with begetters of children is a positive good; but the emission of semen, in intercourse and otherwise, is polluting.\(^{42}\) Orthodox priests to this day undergo *baraśnom* after the marriage night, which with the breaking of the hymn has its additional impurity; and thereafter husband and wife should both bathe after intercourse, for which certain *māhtras* are moreover prescribed.\(^{43}\) *Pollutus nocturna* is naturally impure, and if it should occur during a priest's initiation, this is held to show that the candidate is unworthy, and he is not allowed to proceed.\(^{44}\) The ban is absolute and life-long. An occurrence during the *baraśnom* retreat grapples the purification.\(^{45}\)

Any flow of blood also affects purity, since it is a breach in the ideal physical state. If a priest has a scratch that bleeds he may not solemnise a sacred ceremony; and in the strict orthodoxy of the post-Sasanian period to swallow one's own blood from a drawn tooth was polluting.\(^{47}\) This doctrine of the impurity of blood is one that pressed hard on women, for in consequence her monthly courses make every woman unclean. During these days, therefore, she has had to withdraw from her family as strictly as possible, sitting apart in some dark corner from where her impure gaze could not fall on the good earth, or running water, or fire, or the sky and sun and moon, or plants and animals, or the righteous man.\(^{48}\) During this time she must wear old (though scrupulously clean) clothes set apart for this purpose,\(^{49}\) sleep alone on old bedding, and eat sparingly of plain food\(^{50}\) served to her from a distance on a special plate\(^{51}\) (as in the case of the *nasā-sādār*); not taking part in domestic tasks (unless perhaps sewing or patching some garment that can be thoroughly cleansed and washed thereafter), and assuredly never preparing food for herself or others, since this would be direct contamination of Hordād and Amurdād. (The souls of women who had transgressed in this way were seen by Ardāy Vīrā in deepest hell.\(^{61}\) Tiny children have to be kept away from their mother by coercion or force, and if she is nursing a baby, this in its turn becomes unclean through the necessary contact.\(^{62}\) In sum, a woman during this time, however virtuous, and however strict in her general observance of the rules of purity, is regarded as being as impure as a harlot, and as blighting to the good creation. These harsh usages

Zoroastrian women among the orthodox to be left to sleep peacefully during these nights, while the men are awakened from time to time to watch and pray.\(^{79}\) On such matters see Riv., Unvala, I 249-7 ff., Dhabhar, 252 ff.

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\(^{46}\) Riv., Unvala, I 144-8-10, Dhabhar, 162-3.

\(^{47}\) See, e.g. Pak. Riv. Dd. LV. 3 (ed. Dhabhar, 165-6); Riv., Unvala, I 98-12-17, Dhabhar, 35.

\(^{48}\) Thus one of those whom Ardāy Vīrā saw in hell was a woman who had put hairs upon the fire (AVN XXXIV, Asa-Haag 65-170). In the Persian Rīshāyāli the expression "nāzāt of the living" is used also as a synonym for *hikhr*, see Unvala, I 98-14 ff., Dhabhar, 79; and in the Avesta *hikhr* is applied to polluting matter from corpses (Vd. 5.14,16), so that the usages of the two words are by no means distinct or clearly defined.

\(^{49}\) On nightly pollution see Vd. 18.46-52, Riv., Unvala, I 103, Dhabhar, 207; Farsiāy Nāma, Modi 18-9-27-8. In the later Indian texts also certain expiations were prescribed for it, see W. Gampert, *Die Sühneremonien in der altindoischen Rechtsliteratur*, Prague 1932, 150 ff.

\(^{50}\) See Boyce and Kotwal, *BSOS* XXXIV, 1971, 311 with n. 101.

\(^{51}\) See Modi, CC. 156 n. 1.

\(^{52}\) For details see Modi, CC. 137. (If it occurs during any night of the *baraśnom* required before the celebration of the expanded ceremony of *Nirangdin*, this annuls the ritual entirely.) Men accordingly sleep little during the *baraśnom*, and it is one of the few privileges of

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\(^{28}\) See AVN LXXII. 4-8 (ed. XX.5). Saf. III. 27-9. The restrictions upon a woman at this time are set out in detail in Vd. 16, and reproduced with amplifications in Saf. III. See also Sadar Nāpy, XI, LXVIII (transl. West, SHE XXV. 302-5, 332-7); Sadar Bld. XVI (transl. Dhabhar, Rīshāyāli, 968-70); Riv., Unvala, I 209 ff., Dhabhar, 213 ff.; Farsiāy Nāma, Modi 9-10-15-16; Modi, CC., 161 ff. On the tiny windowless hut in which the Yazdis women used to pass these days down to the early decades of the present century see Boyce, *The Zoroastrian houses of Yazd*, *Iran and Islam, Studies in memory of F. Minorsky*, Edinburgh 1971, 190. Vd. 16.11 ff. enjoins setting a place apart where a woman in menstruous West: this was later termed *dāksanistian*, see e.g. Saf. II. 25 (where it is evidently within the dwelling-house, as in later practice). Further, Riv., Unvala, I 207-3 ff., Dhabhar, 213-14.

\(^{29}\) It is repeatedly said that clothing which has been heavily contaminated may after thorough purification and washing be set aside to be used for this purpose, see Vd. 5.16-9 and, e.g., Riv., Unvala, I 135-7-90, Dhabhar, 153. Respect for the good creation leads Zoroastrians to refrain, and nothing should be needlessly thrown away, see Vd. 5.60.

\(^{30}\) See Vd. 16.7, and the passages cited above on the rules for women in menstrus.

\(^{31}\) See Vd. 16.6.

\(^{32}\) AVN LXXVI. 6-7 (Asa-Haag, 109/193).

\(^{33}\) Vd. 16-7.
probably represent elaborations of ancient restrictions inherited from Iranian paganism, of a kind widespread among the peoples of the world; and, again, given the Zoroastrian premisses, the line of thought is logical, the practice consequent. Zoroastrian women have suffered much under them, yet the orthodox observe them voluntarily, with both resignation and stoic pride. The rules are stern, to observe them is often a struggle, but they are part of the fight against evil, and so to be strictly kept. This attitude of mind enables self-respect to be maintained in spite of humiliating restrictions.83 The menopause marks a welcome cessation, however; and still in the orthodox Iranian villages a pious old lady will then sometimes undergo the ḫurūnām purification annually three, six or nine times, year after year, and will keep her purity as strictly as a temple priest, rejoicing in being wholly and perpetually clean at last, and able thus to prepare herself for eternity.

Although pregnancy gives a woman respite from the restrictions attendant on menstruation, yet child-birth too is regarded as a heavy pollution, requiring isolation, with similar observances, for 40 days;84 and a yet greater contamination, still much dreaded by the orthodox, is to bear a dead child, for this means that the mother has carried nāzād within her body, and the ritual of purification enjoined for this is rigorous and prolonged.85 It is laid down, moreover, that for the first three days she should not drink the pure creation of water, but instead gōmēz, in order to cleanse the "grave" (dabhma) within her;86 and even in winter she must not approach fire, unless the cold is so sharp as to endanger her life.

Compared with these regulations, the precautions which hedge hair and

83 In general women have a dignified position in the Zoroastrian community, as men’s partners in the common struggle against evil, and this appears due to Zoroaster’s own teachings (see above, p. 231). As in other religions, however, the attitude of the male tends to be inconsistent. The Christian has considered women now as sisters of the Virgin Mary, now as the tribe of the temptress Eve. So the Zoroastian looks on woman now as alawān, the creature of Ormazd, and now as corrupted and sullied by Ahura to be his impure ally. Thus the Creator is once represented as saying to woman: "Thou art a helper to me, for from thee man is born, but thou dost give me that which is Ahura’s opposite".87

Saddar Nāṣr XVI, 4 (ed. Dhabhar, 15, transl West, SBE XXIV, 277); Riv., Unvala, I 227-4. Dhabhar, 224-5. Once again the purity laws produce a seeming anomaly, for, as Darmesteter observed, one might think that a woman just delivered of a child "ought to be considered pure amongst the pure, since life has been increased by her in the world, and she has enlarged the realm of Ormazd. But the strength of old instincts overcame the drift of new principles" (SBE IV, lxxix). Birth had had, however, no place in the perfect world created by Ormazd, and will be unknown after Fragnède. It belongs therefore wholly to this world of Mixture, and so could logically be treated as in part aṣevis.

84 See Vd. 5.35-64; Saddar Nāṣr LXXVII; Riv., Unvala, I 227 ff.; Dhabhar, 227-34.

Vd. 5.31; see Darmesteter’s comment, ZA II, 60 n. 88.

85 For references see above, p. 300 n. 35.

86 For references see above, p. 230 n. 35.

87 For references see above, p. 231 n. 35.

88 For references see above, p. 232 n. 35.

89 For references see above, p. 233 n. 35.

90 For references see above, p. 234 n. 35.
Apart from ritual requirements, to maintain simple physical cleanliness is a basic duty for a Zoroastrian, for cleanliness is an absolute good, a characteristic of Ohrmazd’s creation; and unless the believer is clean in body as well as soul, his good works, it is said, do not accrue to his account. Before each of the five daily prayers, the Zoroastrian should wash face, hands and feet (a prescription adopted, with the times of prayer, by Islam). To do this he first unties the kusti, then washes, then reties the kusti with the appropriate prayers; and the whole observance is therefore called pādyāb-kusti (to distinguish it from the simple rite by which a person, being already ritually clean, unties and reties the sacred cord without ablutions). Before taking part in any major act of worship, public or domestic, the Zoroastrian must wash the whole person, from head to foot, and put on fresh clothes, so as to be physically clean for the spiritual purification of the rite. Any uncleanness debars him from taking part in a religious ceremony, or from entering a holy place; and since no unbeliever keeps all the Zoroastrian purity laws, no one of another faith is allowed to be present at a religious service, since his uncleanliness would mar it and prevent it reaching the divine beings. (It is presumably for this reason that the idea gained currency that the Zoroastrian priestly rites were mysterious and shrouded in secrecy; but this is not so. Participation is open to all believers, men and women, old and young, learned and ignorant, provided only that they are in a state of purity.) Cleanliness extends also to places of abode; Zoroastrian houses are always well swept and dusted, and before a high festival or family holy day everything is brushed, washed or scoured with especial zeal.

The doctrine that one must be pure to approach the divine beings gave rise to the rule that the grossly unclean should not say even their private devotions. In the Vendidad this restriction is applied equally to the woman in menses and to anyone afflicted with a physical injury. Neither may raise their hands in prayer. Later the Persian expression “a woman without prayer” (zan-i bi-namās) came to be a standard circumlocution for a woman in her monthly courses. The doctrine that physical injury and defects also were inflicted by devilish agency, “the mark of Agra Mainyu

set on men”, meant that the priests themselves were required to be physically perfect. A deformity or disfigurement was permanently disabling professionally, just as a wound was temporarily so. Because of this, locally at least, a candidate for the priesthood, having passed all other tests, had to present himself naked to the priestly college before acceptance into its ranks.

The orthodox laity, going about their daily work, keep the rules of purity as fully as they can; but they look to their priests to observe these with even greater rigour, to be “cleanest of the clean” (pāh-i pāh in Persian idiom), in order that their prayers may be the more effective. This must have been the case down the centuries; and it is probably partly to preserve their stricter rule of life that Zoroastrian priests have tended to live somewhat apart from the laity. The priest’s purity is built up, on the basis of physical cleanliness, through the many holy rituals in which he takes part; and it is so much greater than a layman’s that until recently a priest would not eat food prepared by a Zoroastrian layman, still less by a juddin; nor would he eat while having paiwand, a physical link, with anyone else, such as would be created by a common cloth, for this would bring the danger that, while performing this nearly sacramental act, he might be brought unwittingly into contact with some uncleanness. (Thus the priest in his purity segregates himself as strictly in this respect as the nāst-i-sād-tā in his impurity, but for the opposite reason.) Careful isolation was practised in this regard by priests even among themselves; and naturally at all times they sought to avoid physical contact with those of lesser cleanness. Even in the laxer usage of today a priest keeping the highest ritual purity will not form paiwand with a juddin by handing him something directly, but will set it down and retreat a little before the other picks it up. In general the orthodox Zoroastrian maintains his ritual purity by strict self-discipline, and is watchful lest it should be vitiated through his own or others’ carelessness.

Yet, despite vigilance, contamination cannot be wholly avoided in a world where Ahramin is at work; and so a number of different means of purification had to be devised, to meet various needs. These are all based on a threefold process: the recital of Avesta (by both the ministering priest and the person being cleansed), which brings to bear the purifying power of the holy words; an inward cleansing, through drinking mirang

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93 See, e.g., Sm I, 92-2 (ed. Tahav, 101-2).
94 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
95 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
96 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
97 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
98 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
99 See, e.g., Suth. XXX (ed. Talav, 103-5);
(consecrated bull’s urine) with a pinch of ash from a pure fire, and outward cleansing with gómēs (unconsecrated urine, from cow or bull), followed (either directly or after the additional use of sand) by a washing of the whole person with water. Since until this washing is complete there may be a vestige of uncleanness lingering, the candidate cannot plunge into water, or even touch a vessel containing this pure liquid; and so instead water is poured over him, from head to foot, by whoever is administering the rite. It seems to have been this part of the basic purification ritual which was originally known as barāsnom, a Middle Iranian word deriving from Avestan barśnā “top, head”. Later this term came to be used as an abbreviated name for the most elaborate of the cleansing rites; and the ablution itself is now called by the Iranians descriptively āverākhī “pouring of water”. For the simplest of the threefold cleansings the Zoroastrians adopted in Islamic times the Arabic term ghūst “bath”, pronounced by them ghosel, but later the Parsis came to apply this word to a particular contamination (pollutiis nocturna) which requires this cleansing, and nowadays the various purification rites are generally known among them as nāhn (the Gujarati word for “bath”), the ghosel proper being called sade nāhn. Apart from its use to remove specific contaminations, the ghosel or sade nāhn, which may be administered without elaboration in the home, is regularly given to children about to put on sūdra and kūstī for the first time, so that they may enter the religious community wholly clean; and to the laity and women of priestly class before marriage and before the great holy days of the faith, or particular days of family observance, when complete purity is sought.

When there has been a more serious, known contamination, which in Persian idiom makes a person rīman “unclean”, a more elaborate purification should be administered, namely the sī-sīy or sī-sūr “30 washings”. This too may be undergone at home; but since there is pollution present, the priest keeps a careful distance, the rīman being isolated by entering an enclosure cut off by a kās or furrow, drawn (like the kās round a corpse) to pen in the contamination. There seem to have been a number of local variations in the details of this purification, but the following Yazdi method contains its essentials: after the rīman has drunk nīrav, in the three prescribed ritual sips, the priest passes him, one after the other, the three agents for outward cleansing—gómēs, sand and water—in a ladle at the end of a long stick with nine “knots” in it (usually a bamboo with nine rings), pouring each of these into his cupped hands from above, so that there is no āvāward between them. Each agent is given nine times, making twenty-seven “washings” in all; and then finally pure water is poured over the rīman three times from head to foot, thus making up the “thirty washings”, after which he is once more “clean”. In recorded times this purification appears to have been chiefly administered to women after childbirth, in which case the actual cleansing was done by a woman of priestly family, while the priest himself recited the appropriate mahdras close by. It is still so undergone in some of the orthodox Yazdi villages, where it is also occasionally given to men as well; but among the Parsis by the beginning of this century it was already, it seems, very largely replaced by the sade nāhn. It is said that in Kerman the sī-sīy was undergone annually by women before the festival of Sprendmad, the yazdā who cares for them especially; and orthodox Parsi women still make a practice of taking the sade nāhn before this feast.

For heavy contaminations, in the main through contact with nāsā, a prolonged ritual of purification was imposed, called the barāsnom-i nō saba “the bathing of the nine nights”. Among the Iranians this is referred to as a plan of the kās for sī-sīy see Anquetil, ZA II, Pt. XIII, opp. p. 549. In Iran some confusion has developed in recent years between the sī-sīy and the barāsnom-i nō saba, for the former rite, although still administered at the home, is now given with the elaborately drawn kās proper to the nō saba. The writer witnessed this in 1964.

For a different form of administration (though whether that of Kerman or Surat is not clear) see Anquetil, ZA II, 548-50.

See Riv., Univalla, I, 601-2-5. Dhabhar, 380. This is also the practice when nō saba is administered to a woman. The argument was, however, advanced in the past that the actual gaze of the pāsī-widēkhāgār was essential to purification, just as it is essential to consecration in the high rituals, the priest being in the position of healer.

In 1969 the writer met one young man who had undergone it that year in the village of Moara Kalkotar, near Yazd. In Kerman, however, it was regarded then as a rite solely for women. The rite is not even mentioned by Modī in his Ceremonies and costumes (first published in 1922).

For this in modern times they usually go to a fire temple, making, it is said, a charming sight when they emerge again, “pure” and radiant, like a flight of butterflies in their lovely sarīs.

This rite is so important that there are ample descriptions of it. See IV, 9: Riv., Univalla, I, 585-6, 600-13, Dhabhar, 332-8; Anquetil, ZA II, 545-8; Modī, CC, 102-41. Darmesteter, ZA II, 161; West, SpBE XVIII, 431-54. Again there are local variations in its administration (on some of which see F. K. Ahmadzai, Sir J. J. Madhava Centenary Fel. Bombay 1967, 105-7), but the basic ritual as laid down in the Vendidad remains con-
to familiarly as *na-swa*, whereas the Parsis call it simply either barasnom or nahn. For this, because of the extent of the pollution, the initial cleansing, that is the barasnom proper, must be administered in a place apart, called the barasnom-gâh, a term contracted among the Parsis to *barasingô*. This should if possible be some barren, desolate spot, remote from water and fire, plants, the creatures of Vahman and righteous men. In recorded usage this place has always been enclosed by a wall, ostensibly to keep in the pollution; but since this can be done effectively by ritually-drawn kaš, it may be rather to secure privacy amid a * jagdî* population. The barasnom-gâh is always roofless, however, so that it is open to the purifying rays of the sun; and traditionally it is round, so that there are no dark corners for contamination to lurk in. Two priests should engage in the task of cleansing, and one should hold a dog by a metal chain, so that the animal’s gaze may help to banish the impurity. The cleansing takes place inside a ritual precinct within the barasnom-gâh, created by surrounding a small area with a series of elaborately-drawn kaš made, with recital of Avesta, in such a way as to form a firm barrier against pollution. In ancient times nine holes (*maqha*) were dug within this precinct, in which the *rimân* squatted naked to undergo the process of purification, becoming gradually cleaner as he moved from one to the next. Later the holes were done away with, and the nine stations came to consist simply of nine stones, or sets of stones, laid on the surface of the ground. (A simpler arrangement of stones is used also in the *si-fây*, the purpose in both rites being presumably to keep the contamination away from the earth.) A common idiom among the Iranis today for undergoing barasnom is accordingly to “go on the stones”; and sometimes, if the purification is administered around noon, this can in itself be something of an ordeal, as they become blistering hot in the rays of the midday sun. After the ritual drinking of *nîrang*, the *rimân* is purified “on the

115. An attempt to simplify this in the 9th century A.C. provoked in rebuke the Epistles of Manakâhri, a high priest of Pars, 114. Since these same two terms are used by them on occasion also for the *ghost* or *fâtâ* nahn, it is not always clear from their writings which purification is in fact meant. 113. For a description of the barasnom-gâh of Yazd at the beginning of this century, see Jackson, Persia past and present, 393. The old barasingô at Namsari, just outside the little town, was likewise a round enclosure (information from Dr. Firoze Kotwal). 112. In most of the descriptions of the barasnom-rite cited above a plan or plans are given of this ritual enclosure. For plans showing different ways of arranging the furrows and stones in Iran and India in modern times see Ric, Uyovala, I 587; 588, 600. 111. Nyberg’s attempt (Rel., 147 ff) to associate this word with Gothic *maga* (see above, p. 250) has not met with acceptance. 110. Possibly therefore the practice of doing away with the holes and laying the stones on (rather than in) the ground may have been adopted as Zoroastrian priests pondered ever more earnestly on how to guard the “creations” from contamination. 119. stones” with the three agents of *gômè*, sand and water. The administering priest again passes these to him with the nine-knotted stick, as in the *si-fây*, avoiding all physical contact; and he stands carefully outside the furrows which surround the stones. The manner in which the *rimân* is to apply the three agents to his naked body, from head to foot, is exactly laid down in the *Vendâd*, and the ancient prescriptions are still strictly followed. After he has passed over all the nine stations, and is freed from impurity, the candidate steps out of the kaš on to a tenth stone, where pure water is poured over him from head to foot. He then puts on fresh white garments, retying his *kusti*; and thereafter he withdraws to some clean, secluded place, the *baraSnom-khâne* or *nahn-khâne*, where he lives apart for the next nine days and nights, observing the strictest rules of physical cleanness, and the greatest respect for the “creations”. He also devotes much time to prayer. Three times during the retreat, on the fourth, seventh and ninth days, in the same gâh or watch in which the initial barasnom was given, a priest administers to him a simpler ablution, called the *nausây* (apparently “washing of the nine (nights)”), which may take place either in the open or under a roof. For it the candidate goes on to a set of three stones, within a threefold kaš, and afterwards puts on newly-washed garments, which have been washed by a “clean” person in pure water. Throughout the retreat the candidate must be looked after by a “clean” person, his *parestâr* or attendant, who supplies his meals—which he must eat in clothes kept especially for this purpose only, with gloves on his hands, and using a metal spoon, so that respect is scrupulously shown to *Hordad* and *Amurâd*. The strictest precautions are taken too not to touch the earth, *Spandârmad*, with bare foot or hand; and all physical contact, *paivand*, is avoided with any other person, so that no impurity may be transmitted—although there is no bar to pleasant and indeed merry conversation, for cheerfulness is always encouraged by the Good Religion. Sitting by day or sleeping by night the candidate is

118. For a photograph of a candidate “on the stones”, with the two administering priests and the dog, see D. Menant, “Sacerdoce zoroastrien à Naşvan”, Conferences au Musée Guimet, 1911, 273; reproduced by M. Molé, L'Iran ancien, (Religions du Monde), Paris 1965, following p. 97; and by J. Bauer, Symbolik des Parsisismus, Tafelband (Symbolik der Religionen), Stuttgart 1973, p. 123. 117. The cleansing “on the stones” is, however, now largely symbolic, and rapidly performed. (Through the generous permission of a woman candidate, the writer was allowed to witness the rite in Sharifbad, Iran, 6, 1964.) 116. See Modi, CC, 138-9, Dâhath, Rit, index s.v. *nau-sây*. 115. In Iran it is now required that this should be done by a young girl who has not yet begun her monthly courses; but this seems an elaboration, since it is unknown in India. 114. This and what follows describes Iran usage, since the fact that the Parsis now limit the rite to priests has somewhat altered matters in India.
allowed only one thin cloth or quilt between himself and the ground;\(^{123}\) and if he is a man, he will not be allowed to sleep much, but will be roused from time to time by his parest\(\bar{\text{a}}\), for a nocturnal pollution during the first three nights vitiates the whole rite, and all must be done again. There are thus considerable rigours to the retreat; and the young and energetic moreover often find the confinement irksome. Nevertheless even lay people, less accustomed than priests to such restraints, are usually influenced, as the time passes, by the quiet discipline of these isolated days, filled with prayer and godliness (for to a Zoroastrian cleanliness, it has been observed, is next to godliness, but a part of it); and they emerge from their seclusion with a true sense of purification and a renewal also of the spirit.

There are various pollutions which make this prolonged rite necessary, most of them involving contact with a corpse. Such pollution may be incurred through acts of neighbourliness—a woman attending a sick-bed, a man helping to move a dead body—and it may involve quite young children. (In Iran it is the custom, locally at least, that the body of a still-born baby is carried to an unconsecrated place of exposure by two children who have not yet attained puberty, two boys for a male infant, two girls for a female.\(^{149}\) Moreover, possibly in post-Sasanian times (for it is not recorded in any old treatise) the ideal was set that every member of the community should undergo *barašnom* na-baby at least once in his or her life in order to purge away the physical contaminations of birth\(^{125}\)—a logical extension of the general way in which birth was regarded; and, down to the present century, this was the common practice in Iran among the better-off, who would gather a group of young cousins and friends to pass the retreat together soon after they had been invested with the *kusti*. Although the strict discipline of the rite was enforced, the time was nevertheless made to pass pleasantly and cheerfully for these young candidates.\(^{126}\) In yet other instances, it was not so much the removal of a particular impurity which was aimed at, but rather an increase of existing purity for some special purpose. Thus, as we have seen, elderly people sometimes seek through undergoing this rite to end their days in a state of the utmost physical cleanliness as well as spiritual grace; and since priests cannot perform any of the high rituals effectively without full purity, they necessarily undergo *barašnom* many times in their lives, both before initiation and repeatedly thereafter as a required preliminary, a renewal of perfection, for the highest ceremonies.\(^{127}\) The importance of purity in Zoroastrianism is shown by the fact that a name for priests qualified to perform the "inner" rituals is *yāddāthkhrar* "he who makes pure."\(^{128}\)

There is a possibility of undergoing the *barašnom* rite vicariously, either for the living or the dead. Thus sometimes still in Iran a devout person will go through it for a relative who has committed the grievous sin of taking his or her own life, or for one who has been drowned or burnt to death. If it is a case of suicide by drowning or burns the sin is doubly heavy,\(^{129}\) and water is not then used at all in the cleansing, but *gômêz* is applied throughout. This inflicts a severe penance, because the ammonia remaining on the skin for nine days is irritating, especially in hot weather;\(^{130}\) but this is plainly not the intention behind the practice, which is rather to guard the pure element of water from contact with such deep pollution, even though the rite is being undergone by proxy. Then among the living there are some, such as busy merchants and farmers, who even when they incur pollution are reluctant to make time for this period of enforced inaction; and they pursue what seems a long-established practice of paying others to undergo the purification on their behalf. Naturally the purer the person thus employed, and the more scrupulously he performs all the rituals and observes all the restraints, the more efficacious the act is likely to be; and so it is priests who are generally resorted to as substitutes. This development reached such a point among the Parsis that in the course of the 19th century their priests gradually ceased to administer *barašnom* at all to the laity; but they themselves, if *yāddāthkhrar*...
undergo it frequently, both for their own sakes and on behalf of others. As a corollary of this development (whereby the rite is only undergone by those already pure), and also because the Parsis do not now live in separate town wards and villages, the barasnom-gāh or barasingī is no longer isolated in India, as of old, but is now within the compound of a fire temple, as is the barasnom-khāne. This has the practical advantage that after the initial purification, the candidate can go directly to the place of the nine nights’ retreat without risk of new contamination through contact with juddims. (In the city of Yazd, where the old barasnom-gāh remained in use until the 1950’s, candidates used to have to wait there till darkness fell, when they could pass through empty lanes.) The temple barasnom-gāhs of the Parsis are usually rectangular rather than round, thus fitting more easily into the general lay-out of courtyard and building. In Iran barasnom was given generally up to the early decades of the present century; and in Yazd and some of its villages the rite is still administered by one or two priests to those of the laity, men, women or children, who seek it—usually a score or so annually. The Parsi priests still administer the rimani barasnom in a place apart to the really contaminated (notably nasā-sālars) who need more than the proxy purification.

It seems that in the past, after Zoroastrianism had become a state religion, and its adherents were therefore the heterogeneous mass that makes up the population of any large country—rich and poor, devout and sceptical, strenuous and lazy—the practice prevailed whereby those who wished and had the means could compound any of their offences, whether against morality or the laws of purity, by money-payments. These were made either to procure vicariously a restoration of purity, as in the case of the barasnom-practice just described, or to atone for sins through the celebration of religious services. It seems probable that the detailed physical punishments for various transgressions (so many strokes of the whip) which are listed in the Vendidad were elaborated simply to provide

a scale for such money payments, in terms of which they were interpreted. This system was plainly open to abuse, like the selling of pardons in medieval Christendom; and it appears remote from the strenuous moral teachings of the prophet himself. It has nevertheless its logic, and one can see how it must gradually have developed: the performance of the high rituals was meritorious, since it helped the good creation, and only priests could solemnize them. To pay them to do so was therefore a virtuous act, requiring self-denial or at least some liberality on the part of the penitent; and it weighed accordingly in the scales of judgment against the sin which he had committed. If enough services were performed, the wrong-doing could be wholly counterbalanced. The case for vicarious purification is more difficult to justify; but presumably the practice began with the barasnom being performed for the benefit of the departed, after which the analogical argument could be advanced that if the dead could be cleansed by proxy, why not the living also? In general the belief that rites and prayers can aid the dead seems wholly alien to Zoroaster’s teaching of each man’s responsibility for his own fate; but it is in accord with the ancient Indo-Iranian tradition of caring for the souls of one’s kindred, and seeking to help them, and it should therefore presumably be regarded as a tempering of the prophet’s doctrines to the emotional and pious needs of less strong natures, in accordance with old-established customs and observances. Christian and Muslim practices of interceding for the dead seem no more nor less soundly based.

Another method of cleansing the soul from sins, including sins of pollution, was by confession. This was not practised in the hope of obtaining thereby forgiveness from God for evil done, but rather as an act of value in itself, an acknowledgement of failure which, with the intention to amend, constituted good words and thoughts, and so partly counterbalanced the fault (though since actions weigh more than words or words, confession is not enough in itself to cancel out bad actions). The Pahlavi word for “confession,” patīl, comes from Avestan pāstīla, meaning “expiation.” In the Pahlavi books confession of sin is repeatedly

131 The link between employer and proxy is close. The death of the former not unnaturally brings the rite to an end; but also if the employer is a woman, and her monthly course begins at the time, the rite must be broken off, and begun again fresh thereafter. See Modi, CC, 190-1.
132 See Rih, Uvahla, I 355-601; Dhabhar, 378-380; Modi, CC, 145-9. The drawing of the kaf is simpler, but greater precautions than ever are used to prevent contact between the ministering priest and the rimani; and instead of a second priest the assistant, among the Parsis, is a layman (necessarily less pure), who performs the actual barasnom or watering of the priest at the end, when it is necessary to approach the rimani closely. With their modified usages the Parsis do not require the rimani barasnom to be followed by the nine nights’ retreat; but among the Irans the purified rimani goes through this like everyone else.
133 For Pahlavi tables converting the apparently ancient punishments for sins into a series of money-dos see F. M. Rothwal, Supp. texts to Wet., Appendix 1 (pp. 115-4). In the Pahl. Riv. Di. XV, 4 (ed. Dhabhar, 43) it is said of sins: “Everyone who is able should pay (in cash).”
134 There were, however, serious attempts to reconcile belief in the efficacy of rites on behalf of the dead with Zoroaster’s own teachings. See, e.g., Di. Pur. VII (ed. Dhabhar, 23-5, trans. West, SBE XVIII, 26-8), where it is said that benefit accrues to the soul of the departed only if the man when living had either ordered the rites, or intended them. Otherwise they do not help him. More generally, on the occasion by a son of the sins of his father see Pahl. Riv. Afarandag, CXLI (BTA, I 734, II 115-2).
135 See Bartholomae, Art. Wb. 429. The Zoroastrians now pronounce the word patīl.
urged, and four formulares exist for this purpose. These are relatively long works, all much alike, and in their present form probably post-Sasanian in date. In living Zoroastrianism their use is confined to specific occasions when purity of soul and body is especially sought, as at marriage, or the beginning of the new year, and in connection with harašnām and other purification rites. A patīš is always recited on behalf of the dead during the three-day ceremonies, for "the patīš serves as a wall before hell". As for the living, "the case of sin is like the case of a good deed. Like the good deed, which from the moment one performs it, and as long as a man lives, grows bigger every year, sin likewise grows bigger every year; but when one makes confession, it no longer increases. It is like a tree which withers and makes no more growth". The confessional texts, regarded in this light, are thus beneficent maṭhās designed to limit the effects of bad actions.

The doctrine behind the use of confessionals may in fact be very old, like the concept of the maṭhā par excellence, even though the existing patīšs are late in form; for very much the same beliefs and practices are to be found in ancient India. In the Satapatha Brahmaṇa (II. 5.2.21) it is said: "When confessed, the sin (emas-) becomes less, since it becomes truth (satya-)." Confessional verses of a general character are found already in the Rigveda, as in one famous hymn to Varuṇa (RV 7.86), where the following lines occur: "Set us free from the misdeeds (drgadhā-) of our fathers, from those that we ourselves have perpetrated" (v. 5). There are similar lines in RV 7.89, 5: "Whatever wrong we men commit against the race of heavenly ones, O Varuṇa, whatever law of thine we have broken through thoughtlessness, for that sin (emas-) do not punish us, O god". Prayers for deliverance occur in the Atharva-veda, from which the following verses have been cited as typical: "If knowing, if unknowing, we have committed sins (emas-), do ye deliver us, O Viśvedevā, from that, accordant. If waking, if sleeping, I, sinful, have committed sin, let what is and what is to be done be from that...". Such Vedic verses were used with longer confessional texts in various expiatory rituals; and these latter are characterised by the use of general expressions of contrition and by the desire "to embrace all imaginable cases of committed sins". In this and in their ritual use these texts resemble the Zoroastrian patīšs; and though this similarity must arise from parallel developments, it seems probable that the basic practice of acknowledging sin goes back to Indo-Iranian times, belonging perhaps especially to the worship of the Asuras. There is no reason, moreover, to think that it would have been unacceptable to the prophet, in so far as it was done by living men in contrite admission of their own failures. Confession on behalf of the dead must, however, be a later extension of the practice, for it breaches Zoroaster's fundamental teaching that each man is directly responsible for the fate of his own soul.

The four existing patīšs, like the Indian confessionals, strive to be all-embracing in their lists of sins committed; and all begin, in full orthodoxy, with acknowledgement of transgressions against the seven Amesāspands and their creations: "...against the Lord Ohrmazd and man... Valman and cattle... Ardvahīšt and fire... Shahrevar and metals... Spendārd and earth... Hordād and water... Amurdād and plants." There follow long lists of many kinds of wrong-doings, which include both moral failures, such as sins of pride and wrath, sloth, envy, malice and the like, and offences against the purity laws; for to the Zoroastrian morality and purity are intrinsically intertwined, and it is their joint pursuit which makes up the good life. As the priests declared: "Our religion is bound up with purity." In former times the use of the confessionals was not confined to fixed occasions, but was enjoined also for atonement for particular acts. Thus in one of the Persian rikhayats it is laid down that if a woman who has had a still-birth is in danger of dying, she may be given water to drink while yet uncleaned, or be brought near a fire, in winter-time, for warmth; but her husband must make confession on her behalf to mitigate the sin she has thus confessed against two of the creations. In general a husband might confess on behalf of his wife, or a father on behalf of a child under 15 years of age; but otherwise vicarious confession was permissible only for the dead.

136 For three of these formulares see Dhabhar, Zand-i Khvāštā Avestā, text Bombay 1927, transl. Bombay 1933. Confession in Zoroastrianism has been discussed by R. Petta- zoni, "Confession of sins in Zoroastrian religion", J. J. Modi Mem. Vol., Bombay 1930, 457-471; J. P. Amussen, Xvāstāwīf in Manichaeism, Copenhagen 1965, Ch. 2. That confession was a form of repairation inferior to a physical act is made clear in Pahl. Riv. Dd. XV b (ed. Dhabhar, 41).

137 Fašiyāl Name, Modi, 4.47-817. The pious daftar here enjoined that each night before sleeping one should recite a patīš, or at least say: "I repent and turn back from every sin that I may have thought or spoken, committed or intended."

138 Sāḏar Nājīr XLV, 3-5 (ed. Dhabhar, 35).

139 Cited by Rodhe, Deliver us from evil, 154.

140 Ibid., 149 (AV 6.112).
The laws of purity were naturally observed with great strictness in connection with the religious rituals, since failure to keep them would render these invalid. The pāvī itself is often referred to, in Muslim times, as the pāvī-mahal,147 or “pure place”; and the fully-qualified priest, as we have seen, is commonly called yezdīthraṣar “purifier”. Before any “inner” ritual begins, the pāvī itself must be made pure, and every vessel and utensil is subjected to a threefold process: first they are scourcd with clean water and wood ash, then washed with the purest possible water (drawn with great care from well or running stream), before being finally consecrated with sacred words. The technical terms now used are that the objects are made first sōf (clean),148 then pāvī (pure), and finally yāste (consecrated). No impure object can ever be consecrated, and to recite Avesta over something which one knew to be impure would be a sin. If after these preparations are completed anything should break the ritual isolation of the pāvī (such as man or beast stepping into it), the whole process is vitiated, and the cleansing, washing and consecrating must be repeated from the beginning.

Both while making these preparations and while performing the actual pāvī-mahal services Parsi priests (being naturally themselves in a state of complete physical and ritual cleanliness) wear spotless white garments which are strictly functional, with none of the impressiveness of the flowing robes which they wear for the “outer” services.149 The short-sleeved sacred shirt, girt in with the kavdī, is worn with close-fitting trousers, so that there is no loose fold of cloth to brush against any consecrated object. (The priest at certain points of the ceremony consecrates his own right hand, but his person and clothing as a whole are only clean, not pure.) His head is covered, concealing the hair (for a loose hair would pollute anything it fell on);150 and nose and mouth are veiled by the paitidāna, Middle Persian pādin, now a piece of fine cotton cloth like a surgeon’s mask, which prevents the breath reaching consecrated objects.151 (Representations of the Achaemenian period indicate, however, that originally only

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147 A mixed Arabo-Persian term, whose second element should, strictly, be written mahāl.
148 An Arabic term adopted in the Islamic period.
149 Islamic usage has been obscured by poverty and oppression, and the subsequent strong influence of the Parse. No representation survives from ancient times which can be certainly identified as showing Zoroastrian priests engaged in the “inner” rituals of the pāvī, as distinct from public ceremonies.
150 All orthodox Zoroastrians used until the 10th century to keep the head covered by day and night, and priests still observe this general rule.
151 In the Pahl. Fār. Dād. XXXVII,3 (ed. Dhahabī, 115) it is enjoined that anyone speaking close to the hearth fire should hold something before his mouth and nose, so that his breath does not reach the fire.

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the mouth was covered, and not the nose.) It is not only this “mask” which suggests a likeness between a pāvī-mahal priest and a surgeon. In general the stringent isolation of the pāvī, and the precision of the performance of rituals there, invite comparison with the operating theatre, with its discipline and strictly observed hygienic rules. The priest himself, like the surgeon a skilled and dedicated craftsman, concentrates utterly on the work in hand. Both men have trained assistants to help them; but as for others who may be there—as worshippers in the one case, observers in the other—their presence is strictly irrelevant, and does not affect the efficacy of what is being done, although they may themselves benefit from attending.

The Zoroastrian priest solemnises the pāvī-mahal services with scrupulous exactness, in purity of intention, word and act. Thereafter what he has consecrated from the vegetable and animal creations he gives as offerings to pure sources of fire and water. A part may also be consumed by those present as worshippers (who must themselves be wholly clean), or poured out on the clean earth beneath trees; and the barsom tie and the fibres of the pounded hōm twigs, once dry, being themselves both pure and consecrated, are placed on the fire within the pāvī,154 so that they too are absorbed by one of the creations.

Since none of the high rituals may properly be performed except by priests who have the purity conferred by the barsom-nī nō sāha, this purification is considered by them the basis of their professional lives; and since barsomnī cannot be administered without certain “tools” or “properties” (now termed dātā), these too are highly regarded. The chief of these are held to be consecrated bull’s urine and wood ash, with which the inner being is cleansed. No ritual is needed to consecrate the ash, for both hearth fire and temple fire are hallowed through the daily recital of prayers; but there is a special religious service for consecrating the bull’s urine, and this has come to be regarded as the most solemn of all pāvī-mahal observances. The ceremony was termed in post-Sasanian times nīrang-i āb ud pādyāb yāstan “the liturgy for consecrating water and bull’s urine”; but already by the 15th century it was generally referred to more simply as nīrang-i dīn, nīrangdīn, “the liturgy of the faith”;155 and the consecrated pādyāb itself had come to be called by transference simply nīrang, the commonest usage today. The long ceremony is performed only by thoroughly experienced priests, who prepare themselves for it carefully,
with an especially strict and stringent barašnom; and of the pādyāb itself, once consecrated, it is said in a Persian rivāyāt: "It is thus evident from a book in the Pahlavi language that the life of religion is from nirang, and the life of nirang is from the high priest, and the life of the high priest is from meritorious deeds and a virtuous disposition... Nirang is that which is prepared by dastūrs with varas, hōm, urvarān, parabhōm, mānθra and zand and the barsom; for though the body be black as charcoal, if it (i.e. nirang) be given for drinking, then the light of God settles on it, and it becomes pure and bright like the sun."\(^\text{114}\)

Even though this passage attributes a magical efficacy to nirang, the insistence that this efficacy depends on its preparation by virtuous priests keeps it Zoroastrian in spirit, though the emphasis shows that it belongs to a late period in the history of the faith. In general Zoroastrianism pursues purity with morality, morality with purity, in accordance with the prophet's basic teachings about the physical and spiritual worlds, and their interdependence. Probably therefore the seed at least of all the observances described in this chapter existed already in the religion's earliest days, being in part indeed an inheritance of pagan usages, maintained by the Good Religion as a weapon in the struggle against the physical assaults of evil.

\(^{114}\) Río., Usvala, I 487.16-488.1, Dhabhar, 333. On varas (the hair "sieve") see further in Vol. III.

**EXCURSUS**

**THE ZOROASTRIAN FUNERAL RITES**

What evidence there is about the funeral rites of pagan Iran\(^1\) suggests that among various Iranian peoples the princes and nobles had adopted the custom of laying the embalmed bodies of their dead within a large tomb, a rite which may have been connected with an aristocratic hope of salvation in Paradise, with resurrection of the body hereafter. There is some reason to think that exposure of the dead was first adopted by Iranians in Central Asia;\(^2\) and whether or not this rite was actually evolved by Zoroaster, the likelihood seems that the prophet himself chose it as that of his own faith, this being one of the measures which revelation gave him the courage to foster or introduce. There are a number of ways in which it accords with his doctrines. Firstly, the body is laid in the open under the life-giving sun, which makes a path of light to draw the soul upwards to the Činvat Bridge. In Zoroastrian tradition it is hvarz, darsā, or, as it is expressed in Persian, khorīd niqārē "beholding by the sun", which is stressed as the chief merit of exposure.\(^3\) The sun's rays, beneficent for the žpenta creation, are also powerful to burn away the pollutions of the body, which in death belongs to the daēvic powers. Moreover, by exposure to birds and beasts the corrupting flesh is itself swiftly destroyed—sometimes in minutes rather than hours—and there is no sullying of the creations of earth or fire or water. Further, in its harshness the rite marks a disdain for the nāsā which the soul has abandoned; and its simplicity accords with the universal character of Zoroaster's message, since it levels all men in death, naked alike beneath the sky.

Scriptural authority concerning the disposal of the dead is all contained, as far as the Avesta itself is concerned, in the Vendīdād; and since this work is a compilation, containing diverse matter from different periods, it is not surprising to find some contradictions, in terminology at least, between various sections.\(^4\) One passage (Vd. 7.47-51) refers to different ways of disposing of the dead, in a manner which suggests that when it

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1. See above, p. 109 ff.
2. See above, p. 113.
was composed the characteristic Zoroastrian rite was far from being generally adopted, let alone enforced. In it Zoroaster is represented as questioning Ahura Mazda about the bodies of the dead—how long it is before a corpse which is laid upon the ground, in light and sunshine, returns to dust; how long before one which is buried in the earth; and how long before one which is placed in a dakhma. The answer is respectively one year, fifteen years, and not until the dakhma itself crumbles away. Therefore, it is said, it is a great merit to destroy dakhmas, and the man who does so turns his sins to good. Similarly in Vd. 3.9 it is declared that that part of the earth feels sharp distress on which dakhmas are thickly set, dakhmas in which corpses of men are laid; and once again (3.13) the merit is urged of destroying these "built-up dakhmas" (dakhma-udzdača-). These passages attest the use of the word dakhma in the sense of a mausoleum or raised tomb within which the body is artificially preserved. This is close to what seems to be its original meaning of "grave", and suggests that in substance these sections of the Vendidad are old. In yet another passage, Vd. 7.56-8, such dakhmas are described as places of corruption where dačas (that is, demons) gather, befouling them and generating disease and further death.

There are other passages in the Vendidad, however, where the word dakhma is used in a quite different sense, that is, for an open place of exposure, lawful and approved. In Vd. 8.2 it is enjoined that when a man dies Mazda-worshippers "shall search for a dakhma, they shall look for a dakhma all around". There is nothing in the context to establish what precisely is intended, whether an artificial structure or simply a suitable natural place for exposing the body, but the latter seems more likely. Unfortunately the same is true of the only other passage where dakhma is used in this sense. This is Vd. 5.14, where it is said that Mazda-worshippers should let bodies lie for a year under the sun, so that rain may fall upon the carrion (nassu-), upon the dakhmas, upon the impurity (hitka-), and so that birds may devour the flesh utterly. The rain-water, it is said (5.74-16), which has fallen first upon the uncleanness, and then upon the bare bones, flows back in the end to the sea Pušitka and there is cleansed again.

As to what is then to be done with the bones, sun-bleached and rain-washed, the Vendidad (6.49-51) allows a choice according to individual means. "Where" (it is asked) "shall we carry the bones of dead men, where lay (them) down?"; and the answer is: "An uzdāna—shall be made, out of reach of dogs and foxes and wolves, not to be raised on from above by

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6 It seems likely that this word was coined when the "Avestaean" people adopted the rite of exposure. The other passage in which it occurs is Vd. 8.72-4, which runs: "O Creator... if the Mazda-worshippers... come upon a fire on which carrion (nassu-) is being cooked—the carrion is being cooked or roasted—how should they act?" Then said Ahura Mazda: "They should kill the one cooking the carrion (nassu-pāha-), they should remove this cooking-pot (dilka-), they should remove this uzdāna-". Dilka is an ordinary word for pot or cauldron (Pers. del, see Bartholomaeus, Alt. Wh. 248), and uzdāna seems to be used in the parallel phrase to express disgust at a cooking vessel being thus degraded to become as it were an ossuary. There is no need, however, to go further and to interpret the passage as referring to cannibalistic practices in Achaemenian or Parthian Iran. To the Zoroastrians any dead "Ahrimanic" creature was nassu, and to cook and eat it was to pollute both the fire and oneself. This gave the barb to the Iranima's taunt that the Arabs were "bird eaters", and the likelihood is that the present passage refers to similar practices among, perhaps, certain aboriginal peoples, who may have eaten a number of things (snakes, frogs, lizards and the like) which Zoroastrians regard as unclean.

7 See Zaehner, 317, and above, p. 236.

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Rain-water. If they shall be able, these Mazdā-worshippers, (let it be) among stones or chalk or clay. If they are not able, let it (sc. the skeleton) be laid down, being its own couch, being its own cushion, upon the earth, exposed to the light, seen by the sun". Uzdāna (which occurs in only one other passage) appears to be a technical term for an ossuary, that is, the receptacle in which bones were finally placed, and though, because of obscurities in vocabulary, the Vendidad passage is far from clear, it is probable to judge from later practice that in it the word was applied either to a cut in mountain or hillside ("among stones or chalk"), or to a casket or urn. Uzdāna is rendered mechanically in Pahlavi as uzdahist, and is glossed by astādān (literally "bone-container"). Ossuaries of all these diverse types are well known from historical times.

The custom sanctioned in the Vendidad for the poor, of simply letting the dry bones rest upon the ground, is not one which archaeology can confirm, but is in fact attested by foreign observers during both the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Theologically the practice was acceptable, since being then "clean" the bones could not harm the good earth; and the Zoroastrian dastirs insisted that it was within the power of the Creator, who had made each single man, to reassemble his most scattered parts at Frašegird. The use of ossuaries to preserve individual bones was therefore helpful rather than necessary. This usage was nevertheless one which satisfied natural piety, and established a place where individual rites for the dead could be performed; and since it has parallels in ancient India (with the gathering up and eventual interment of bones after cremation), it may well have existed already in the prehistoric period. To make the procedure possible, it must have been necessary to expose corpses separately; but as far as places of exposure are concerned, the Vendidad simply

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8 See Zasias, 317, and above, p. 236.
enjoins that the bodies of the dead (narqm iristanqm tamv-) should be carried to the highest places, where carrion-eating animals and birds were known to abound; and there they should be fastened down by the hair and feet (with iron, stone or horn), so that the bones should not be dragged about. The reason given for this is, however, that it is to prevent them being taken near water or plants, not so that they should remain in one place to be gathered up. There is no evidence, therefore, archaeological or literary, for artificially-constructed places of exposure in ancient times; and none for the existence of stone towers of the type of the modern dakhma before the Islamic period.

The old pagan idea that burial in the ground was a way of despatching the soul to the kingdom of the dead beneath the earth evidently lingered on in connection with the Zoroastrian doctrine of hell, as is shown by yet another passage of the Vendidad (Vd. 3.35). Here a curse is laid on him who “does not give as is right and good from his labour to the righteous man [i.e. the priest]... Let him be thrust into the darkness of the earth (Spman- Armastii-), into the place of corruption [i.e. the grave], into the worst existence, on to all beds of arrows”. Plainly if a body were buried, the spirit was thought to have little chance of finding its way upward to the sun-path which leads to heaven above.

Naturally, given the nature of the sources, it is impossible to trace the history of the Zoroastrian funerary rites; but the essential ones were probably evolved in the early days of the faith, for the instinct to perform religious ceremonies at this solemn moment appears universal. Further, since Zoroaster seems to have accepted the age-old belief that the soul lingered on earth for three days after leaving the body, this period was naturally one for special prayers and observances on its behalf. The characteristic points about Zoroastrian observances seem the use of some of the prophet’s own words as matiras at the time of disposing of the body, and the performance of ceremonies on the soul’s behalf dedicated to Sraoša, the yazata of prayer, and a powerful protector against evil. In current usage9 (which is probably that of the earliest times also) the body, being nasdv, is removed as soon as possible, preferably on the same day; but this can be done only while the sun shines, so if death takes place late in the afternoon or at night the funeral must wait till the following day.10 The corpse-bearers recite the opening part of the SroS Bāj, which includes

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9 For details of Parsi funeral rites see Modi, CC. 49 ff.
10 Instructions are given in the Vd. as to how the body should be kept when snow or heavy rain make it impossible to expose it at once; see Vd. 5, 10-11. 8, 4-9, and cf. Šan. 2, 9-10 (Tavadj, 39).

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the Kīm-nā Mazdā, before they approach the body, making pāiwand between themselves by holding the ends of a cord; and thereafter they maintain silence throughout their work, until they have set the body down in the place of exposure (however far away this may be) and have withdrawn from there. They then “leave” the bāj by reciting its closing prayers, having thus kept themselves the whole time under the protection of Sraoša. The service recited by priests before the funeral procession sets out consists of the first and longest of the five Gāhās, namely Gāhā Ahuvavaiti (Y. 28-34), recited in two parts, with a break after Y. 31.4, a verse significant for the soul’s hope of salvation: “If Aša is to be invoked, and Mazdā (and the other) Ahuras, and the and Šraos, then let me seek for myself, through best purpose (vahīsta- manah-) the mighty power (khsakrah-), by whose growth we may vanquish wickedness”. There is evidently special significance here in the word khsakrah, with its double meaning of power and kingdom, and in particular the kingdom of heaven.

The break in the recitation of the Gāhā is made when the corpse-bearers lift the body from the stone slab or patch of gravel upon which it has been lying within kaš, and place it on the iron bier. The priests in their purity never approach nearer to it than three paces, and assuredly never touch it or enter the protective kaš. A procession of mourners follows the bier to the place of exposure; before it sets out all take the bāj of SroS, each man for himself, and then they make pāiwand in pairs, holding between them a cloth or cord, and thus proceed two by two, themselves protected against impurity and evil.11 They halt at least 30 paces from the exposure-place, and wait for the corpse-bearers to return before saying a last prayer for the departed, and leaving the bāj of SroS. All who have attended the funeral perform ablutions to cleanse themselves from death’s evil before taking up their ordinary tasks again.

In later times the religious services performed during the three days grew very numerous, for those who could afford them.12 Those which are regarded as essential (and which may therefore have been instituted fairly early in the history of the faith) are a yazna dedicated to SroS, solemnised in each Hāvan Gah, and an āfrinagān or short service of blessing also dedicated to SroS, and celebrated at the beginning of each Avisrūthīm

11 This procession is known to the Parsis as pāyast (literally “foot-hand”) which they explain as referring to the fact that the mourners always walk, and thus make pāiwand by their hands with one another.
12 For a list of them see Modi, CC. 409-10. Among the Parsis they are referred to collectively as the SroS ceremonies. The optional ones include one to three Vendidad solemnised at night, and a dawn service to SroS in each of the five gahs of each day. It is usual to recite the Farvandī Valī daily during the Avisrūthīm Gah.
Gâh (the time protected by the frauâs). This service incorporates verses from the longer Srôs Yast. Then three ašîragnâns are solemnised during the fateful third night, dedicated firstly to Rašâ and Aršāt together, yaratas of the justice so soon to be meted out to the soul; then to Râman, divinity of the mysterious air through which it must now travel;¹⁵ and finally to the frauâs of the just (ardây frauas),¹⁶ whose company it is about to join. There is another service just before dawn on the fourth morning.¹⁷ The mourners pause as the sun appears to draw the soul up to face Mithra the Judge at the Cinvat Bridge;¹⁸ and then they solemnise a last service, make offering to fire on behalf of the soul, and break three days of abstinence by sharing together the flesh of the animal sacrifice.¹⁹

This sacrifice, and the clothes which are consecrated for the use of the soul during the ašîragnâns of the third night,¹⁶ the sâgâd or showing the corpse to a dog,¹⁹ and the many ceremonies which take place throughout the first year for the soul's sake, and annually thereafter, were all evidently inheritances from Iran's pagan past; and it is difficult to imagine that Zoroaster, with his insistence on the responsibility of each individual for his own salvation, himself countenanced the practice of so many rites designed to help the departed. Such observances clearly meant much to the Iranians, however; and those which were rejected by the prophet were evidently revived again gradually, so that in time the Zoroastrian cult of the dead seems to have incorporated almost all the old elements, subordinated, however, sometimes uneasily, to Zoroaster's own stern doctrines about unserving justice in the hereafter. Similar revivals of old pagan usages can be traced in various branches of the Christian and Muslim communities, despite the difficulties there also of reconciling them logically with strict orthodoxy.

¹³ See above, pp. 89-91.
¹⁴ See above, p. 122 with n. 71.
¹⁵ There is a divergence here in current usage between the Iranis and Parsis, see under the akhmana ceremony in Vol. IV.
¹⁶ That it is Mithra (Mîhr) to whom each man must answer is a doctrine deeply ingrained in popular consciousness, which is often referred to in matter-of-fact fashion by the orthodox of both living communities.
¹⁷ Among the Parsis this sacrifice has been wholly abandoned since the early decades of the present century, and sandalwood is now offered by them instead.
¹⁸ See above, p. 127.
¹⁹ See above, p. 391. With the tendency to triple obsolete observances, the sâgâd was generally, it seems, performed thrice: the dog, that is, was brought to look at the corpse when it was shrouded, before it was carried away from the house, and again at the place of exposure. Among the Parsis it was also performed at the beginning of each new watch (gâh) as long as the body had to remain in the house (see Modi, CC, 58). On this custom in later times in both Iran and India see in more detail in Vol. IV.

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