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Edited by G. K. NARIMAN

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PART I

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FIRDOUSI
the greatest poet patriot of Iran.



Born : 935/6 A. D.



Died: 1020/21 A. D.

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THIS VOLUME BELONGS TO
The Marker
Literary Series for Persia
published by
THE IRAN LEAGUE - BOMBAY.



Mr. Pestonji D. Marker, a patron of the League and Founder of educational institutions in Persia has, with a view to ameliorate the condition of the ancient people, initiated this endowment with the object of promoting researches into the history, literature, philosophy and religions of Persia and strengthening the ties of fraternity among the various religious denominations inhabiting Persia and India, especially between the Moslems and the Zoroastrians.

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INTRODUCTION.



This little book contains four chapters, the Historical and Literary Sketch of Persia of Darmesteter (French), the Influence of Parsism on Islam as studied by Goldziher (German), the destruction of the Fire Temples of Iran and the Rivayats (2 parts).

Darmesteter needs no introduction to any one acquainted with Iran, past or present. Despite its age and a since revolutionized world, the savant's handiwork has elements of permanence. It were impertinent to touch up the jewel. Goldziher was a master of Arabic literature who scrutinised his enormous material, keenly observing the reflections on Persian manners, customs, habits and even Parsi prayers, (Ibnul Balkhi 1, 50) in Arabic. On reading his brilliant *Muhammedanische Studien* especially the fascinating chapter on "Arab and Ajam", (I, 101). I solicited his help in estimating the extent of light which Arabic history and literature shed upon Zoroastrianism, both as the Arabic authors conceived the religion to have flourished in the ancient times and such as they found professed by their contemporaries. In one of his communications, dated June 18, 1912, Goldziher wrote :

"I gathered a great lot of passages in ancient Arabic poetry treating of Persian customs and usages, also of the impression made by the personal appearance of Persians on Arabs. But these passages had to be put in order and treated critically. Perhaps I will find leisure to work out that collection on a future occasion".

Goldziher was not destined to help the Parsi community in the direction in which nobody could have guided them with more extensive knowledge. He died in 1922 (My appreciation in *Bombay Chronicle*, October 29th, 1922). His "Arab and Ajam" the chapter on the Shuubiya, the sect which insisted on fraternal equality of all Moslems, and another essay or two have been selected for the present series to be published in English.

The chapter on Fire Temples is an attempt justly to apportion the responsibility for the decay or destruction of the holy Zoroastrian edifices in Persia. To do justice to the Moslem conquerors, history has to admit that the ruin of these shrines is as much due to the wonton zeal of the new converts to Islam as to the demoralisation and palpable neglect of their Zoroastrian custodians. I have, as a rule drawn here on Arabic originals or their versions in continental languages usually not read in India or Persia. English books like Ousley I leave to dealers in "history" and "research" for the edification of readers who cannot peer over the horizon of their pond of Gujarati. As to the conversion of Fire Temples into mosques, the Moslems of the seventh and eight centuries were but following the bad bold precedent of some of the fanatic Sasanians who turned the idol-fanes into Fire Shrines (Masudi Vol. iv, 76). And what is true of the Fire altars is true of a large portion of the Avesta literature. Both the holy places and sacred scriptures suffered, in part at any rate, through the nerveless and fatalistic apathy of their owners. (*Ahad Nameh* p. x).

Two chapters are devoted to the study of the contents of the *Rivayats*, as a source of Parsi history both in India and Persia. In the second part of this book it is hoped to treat the subject at ampler length. Here it will suffice to appreciate the ground already covered by Orientalists in Europe since Spiegel's methodic initiative in 1860. Only, in studying the *Rivayats* we must keep the fact steadily before our mind's eye: they represent only the obverse of the currency of events; the reverse lies elsewhere. Reared under an environment of advanced Christian civilisation and society, anything apparently incompatible with his acquired mentality and almost unnatural taste is put down by the modern Parsi as an excrescence on the "pure customary law of the Zoroastrians" and traceable to a fancifully corrupt Moslem or Hindu origin. The reality does not answer to this implied assumption of the Indian Parsi's cultural ascendancy. The practices which appear objectionable to the modern Zoroastrian have often their roots in that popular religion which has shown greater vitality and tenacious continuity than the prime word of Zoroaster. Such is the irresistible potency of the system of superstition, euphemistically called popular religion, that today's Parsis offer oblations to gods which Zoroaster would not recognise (Hertel: *Die Zeit Zoroasters*). In Persia too, one beholds gross idolatry with its heathen animal sacrifices at the shrines of Shah Bahram, now happily growing obsolete.

A dispassionate comparative study of Sasanian Persia and Persia under Islam raises the question: Are those quite justified who lay the relative backwardness of modern Persia entirely at the door of Islam? Was Sasanian Iran in its latter days so immeasurably superior in national ethics and social organisation? Why did then the mighty edifice collapse so hopelessly under the shock of a few thousand miserable "lizard-eaters", veritably like a pack of cards? It came down because the moral foundations of the nation were sapped by religious maniacs and it ultimately survived the cataclysm because it had clung to some of the planks of shipwrecked Zoroastrianism.

It appears to me that save and except for the veiling of women and appalling defiance of the laws of hygiene, there is hardly any of the alleged meretricious usages of modern Islam which had no parallel, sometimes in an aggravated form, in the later Zoroastrian period. Let us be loyal to Truth and just to our confreres in Persia.

Not only polygamy and concubinage obtained under the Khosros but if certain Sasanian codes which have outlived neglect are reliable, there were some extraordinary sex relations sanctioned by law. (Bartholomae, *Ueber ein Sasan Rechtsbuch* - p. 13). Not only there were legitimate senior and secondary wives but there were legalised temporary connubiums (Zur Sasan Rechts 1, 29). Not only a man could rejoice in being the husband of more than one senior wife and presumably numberless junior spouses, he was master of slaves of both the sexes (ibid III, 49). An amazing ordinance authorised "only a father

to sell his children into slavery" (ibid V. 22) A society co-ordinated with a system of jurisprudence which recognised the progeny born out of wedlock as "children of the angels" (ibid V. 31) could hardly lay claim to unchallenged moral ascendancy taught by the Prophet of Iran. No, the lofty teachings inculcated by the great Zarathushtra were altered out of all recognition under the Sasanians by the Magian prelates. The latter accommodated the sublime and simple doctrine of Zoroaster to popular requirements with fatal consequences. Between these mercenary Mobeds and their spiritual descendants, the Akhunds and Mullhas of later times, there is little indeed to choose.

A blemish which critics or purists discover in Persian Islam is the practice of Taqiya. It purports to justify a Shia Moslem in either denying his religion or pretending to be a Sunni in order to save himself from the persecution of bigotry. Apart from the question of any inherent morality or otherwise of the doctrine—and we have no call to sit in judgement over others—it is easy to find a parallel to, if not the source of, this religious dissimulation in Parsi tradition. Like Nature, providing for feeble insects and defenceless birds, "protective mimicry" of colour to save them from the onslaughts of their powerful adversaries, the Parsi Rivayats clearly lay down that it is lawful for the Zoroastrian when coerced, to pretend to profess Islam, but to continue faithful to his original belief in secret. This special dispensation was undeniably availed of by thousands who yielded not to compulsion but to temptation in embracing Islam. We meet with scores of Zoroastrians in today's free Persia who put off, and again put on, their sacred garment of

Sadra and their Zoroastrian faith for the reciprocated love of a Moslem damsel or to retain or acquire inheritance or obtain like worldly gain.

Far from opposing the Parsi faith the pre Islamic Arabs had no objection to Zoroastrians living in Arabia. According to Ibn Rosteh (p. 217) these Magians even bore Arabian and not Iranian names. The present day tolerance, which is at bottom almost philosophic indifference, may be imputed largely to the anti-Mullah vigour of the Strong Man of Persia, but I would call a witness of unimpeachable veracity who sojourned in Persia from 1855 to 1858 and again from 1862 to 1864, to prove its existence in pre-Reza Khan epoch. In Persia, says Count Gobineau, a person is a Musalman, Jew, Christian, Parsi, or Hindu: such he lives and such he dies. Properly speaking converts from one religion to another are most rare. We generally see their children if not themselves, reverting to the faith of their fathers. We can cite the examples of many Jews of Persia turned Moslems, of whom some have returned purely and simply to the faith of Moses while others have brought back their children to it, they themselves remaining in the new religion. And what is worthy of note is that the apostacy leads to no trouble with the authorities of the country, although the *Qoran* decrees death for such a crime. But the political reasons which induced the Prophet to consider none but Musalmans as desirable in Arabia and which have caused the Turks to show no pity in case of what is a civil desertion with them, do not exist here. The idea of practical tolerance is what matters. Each is free to do what he pleases at least unless temporal causes are in the way. (*Religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale II*).

Take one instance of a moral principle to illustrate my contention that, Islam or no Islam, the Irani of the Sasanian times is very much alive today. When Shaikh Sadi in his *Gulestan* exhorts us that untruth which brings peace is to be preferred to veracity leading to dissensions, the critics of the poet-philosopher should be referred for the source of his daring counsel not to the Qoran or the Arabic Hadis but the Pahalvi *Dinkard* which is at any rate a semi canonical Parsi text. All his erudite and sacerdotal ingenuity has not availed the official translator, my respected teacher, Shams-ul-Ulema Dastur Dr. Darab Peshoton Sanjana, M. A. Ph. D., to get over a passage in the XIIth book of this *Dinkard*:-

“ And this, too, (is) manifest that there are some who speak truth and become *dravands* (non-Zoroastrians) thereby, and there are some who speak untruth and become holy thereby.”

As a matter of fact, religious dissimulation or something very akin to it and deviation, under given circumstances, from the ordinary canon of righteousness is condoned by all Aryan jurists as may be seen by the provision made for the *Apad-dharma* in the Hindu Dharmashastras. In brief, if we study our theological tracts without prepossession and similarly investigate the sacred texts of the other faiths with an open mind, we shall find that the new Presbyter is but the old priest writ large in Persia as in India, in the East quite as well in the West.

For years it has been my most agreeable task to enlighten my community on the realities of the situation, the mutual relations between the Persians and Arabs. It has not been denied that the decadent Zoroastrians severely suffered at the first fierce impact of the savages of Arabia in the middle of the seventh century. But their sufferings were incalculably intensified by mutual jealousies and internecine wars. The wars are over, but the consuming jealousies still hamper Iran's progress. There has been immemorial antagonism between the Persian and the Arab as belonging to dissimilar ethnic groups, alternately sovereign and subject. The antipathy between Zoroastrianism and Islam has been subsequent and subsidiary. This is the key to an understanding of their inter-relation. The Zoroastrian Persian abhorred the Moslem Persian not so much because he accepted Islam as because he adopted the faith of the execrable Arab. I have laboured to show that compared to the atrocities perpetrated in the name of religion by the Christians, for instance on the Arabs of Spain, and to the barbarities perpetrated by the Sasanian Mobeds on noble Iran's loyal souls like the patriarch Mar Aba, to whose death bed the just Noshirwan depatched his own physician, the hardships and civil disabilities of the Zoroastrians under Moslem rule of Persia were not uniformly intolerable. But for the accumulated racial rancour of centuries, the new religion imposed by Arabs would have been accepted by the masses, as distinguished from the clergy, even with greater alacrity than it actually was. To this day, the Persian Musalman, though he is enjoined by the Qoran to be a brother in Islam to the Arab, has unfortunately not abated an iota of his hatred of the latter. The latest

issue of *Iran Shahr* (March 1925) confirms the deplorable fact. This Persian monthly ably and attractively edited in Berlin by the accomplished Mirza Kazam Zade, appraises the relative superiority of pre-Islamic Persia and tries to bring it home to its present inhabitants without being offensive to Islam. The latest number depicts the Lady Iran being ravished by the forbidding ghouls of Arabia, while the famous Tak-i-Kesra is being consumed in flames and the magnificent piece of art, the carpet of the Imperial Sasanian palace, is being cut into pieces to be distributed as booty, among the marauding barbarians. The picture is at once evidence of the undying detestation of the Arab and the equally immortal Persian artistic genius as developed by Mirza Husayn Khan Taher Zadeh Tabrizi, who is responsible for the portrait.

Persia is still old Iran, vigorously re-asserting her nationality and reviving her renowned culture. Indeed she re-established her indigenous refinements soon after the Arab yoke was overthrown, but not before the Arabs were Iranised (Istiagam, Histoire des Arabes, Huart 11,286) or as is claimed, humanised. All this was first shown by me to reconcile the Parsis to present day Iran and especially her representative educated classes. It is a matter of satisfaction to me that ample, if indirect acknowledgments to my studies are now made in Gujarati by the high priests of the former school of persecution-mongers. And it is amusing to note that those who delineated the sufferings of Zoroastrians as beyond all speech are now giving, pursuing me at a distance of twenty years, examples of Christian religious cruelty before which the stock story of Taher's tyranny pale into

relative insignificance. Which ruling nation, I repeat, in ancient history has not prostituted religion to politics? Even the mild Hindu adherents of the meekest faith of resignation put a price on the head of their formidable rivals of Buddhism as is attested by their own scriptures. (*Divyavadana* p. 427; 434).

All enlightened Parsis who believe in historical research and do not concentrate exclusively upon the shining patches in the history of their ruling ancestors, nor turn the blind eye to the defects of their "divine" career, will welcome this Marker Literary Series for Persia in which it is attempted to call the attention, in all humility, of my co-religionists more to the vulnerability of our traditional information than to what our ignorance and vanity may be pleased to denounce as defects, social, religious, and moral in the usages of other religious fraternities related to us, by ethnic or nationalist affection. Every one with a broad outlook on life which subordinates clannish selfishness based on the accident of birth, to the ultimate welfare of the human race as the children of one Father and not as special groups of chosen people with a monopoly for all the virtues under the sky, will be grateful to Mr. P. D. Marker for the propagation of truth about Persia, its religions, its history, its sociology, its reality, and its potentialities.

Some may see in these pages undue accentuation of the divergence and no indication of the harmony that did obtain between the proto-Aryan and the neo-Semitic cultures in Iran. But if we look with meticulous care into the past, it is only with a view to

draw sound inspiration for the future. The most favourable augury of the latter is manifest in the Capital itself. Teheran the metropolis of an Islamic sovereign state, raises a statue to the great national poet Firdausi, with the spontaneous collaboration of Indian Parsis—a tribute at once to the progressive spirit of Islam and a timely and united appreciation of the most glorious intellectual asset of Iran. The genius of Kamal-ul-Mulk has reconstructed the idealised lineaments of the creator of the *Shaha-Name* to be erected in marble in the Parliament square at Teheran.

In the absence of the requisite library in Bombay, I had to look beyond and I heartily thank Dr. Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology, who has continued to place at my disposal some of the volumes from his own exceedingly choice and valuable library at Simla. I regret the many typographical mistakes and have reasons to hope that they will not recur in the succeeding volumes of this series. The index has been kindly prepared by Mr. Khorshed D. Mobedjina.

G. K. Nariman.

July, 1925.

MAZAGAON P. O.

BOMBAY—10.

PERSIA.

A HISTORICAL AND LITERARY SKETCH

BY THE LATE

PROFESSOR JAMES DARMESTER.

(Translated by G. K. Nariman.)

The history of Persia falls into two great periods, the first proceeding from the beginning to the end of the Arab conquest and the second from the Arab conquest reaching down to our own days.

The second period begins with the battle of Nehavand which sounded the knell of the nation in the year 640 of our era, the first from the advent of Cyrus which opens the truly historical epoch about 560 B. C., so that each of these two periods covers, roughly speaking, a space of twelve centuries.

In the centuries which preceded the appearance of Cyrus the plateau of Iran, that is to say, the immense plain stretching between the Tigris and the Indus and Indian Ocean and the Caspian was peopled or dominated by tribes of Aryan origin, near kinsmen of the Hindus. Two principal centres had formed themselves within this vast domain, the one in the north in Media, the other in the south-east in Persia proper. These two peoples, the Medes and the Persians, children of the same family, however, differed sufficiently in civilization and origin to form two separate nationalities. The Medes were the more advanced.

Long under the yoke of the Scythians, they had been formed in the school of these rude educators; and having overthrown, they succeeded them in the hegemony of Western and Central Asia extending their power over the Persians themselves. The unequal developments of civilization amongst these two peoples conduced to an unequal development of religious ideas. The primitive religion of Iran preserved by the Persians, was a polytheism greatly analogous to that of the other Aryan peoples, and more particularly to that of their near neighbours the Indians. But in Media these primitive beginnings elaborated by the sacerdotal schools of magians, who developed and pushed to the extreme the dualistic elements contained in the old myths which make the gods and the demons enter the lists against each other, culminated in a regular dualism which is called Mazdaism after the name of the supreme deity Ahura Mazda or Zoroastrianism from the name of its founder Zoroaster.

The supremacy of the Medes, founded about the year 650 B. C. by Phraotes, passed under his second successor Astyages from the Aryans of the North to the Aryans of the south, from the Medes to the Persians. It was at this moment that Persia entered the historic plain. From this moment becoming through its conquest of Lydia and the Greeks of Ionia, the neighbour of Europe, it did not cease to be

in touch with them by way of wars, commerce, civilization, and its exterior history is a standing dialogue between itself and our West. This intercourse went on for twelve centuries from the advent of Cyrus down to the time when a new interlocutor, Islam, separated these two rivals and threw back Persia towards the Orient.

The first period is divided into three secondary periods according to the great dynasties which by turns mounted the throne of Iran, the Achaemenides, the Arsacides and the Sassanides. The first period is filled by the struggle of Persia with Greece, the second by her combat with Rome, the third by her encounter with Byzantium.

The first dynasty that of the Achaemenides founded by Cyrus about five hundred and sixty, succumbed with the last Darius in the plains of Arbela, two hundred and thirty years later in 331, B. C. This is the epoch of the greatest expansion of Persia. Already under Cyrus by the conquest of Media, Babylonia and Lydia; Pasargade inherited Ecbatana, Babylonia and Sardes; under Cambyses, Persia succeeded to the Pharaohs in the valley of the Nile; under Darius she stretched towards the East as far as the Indus, in the West she threw herself beyond the sea as far as Greece and Europe. Then she dashed her-

self to pieces against the prows of the Athenian galleys and shrank back into her Asiatic limits. There she organised under the hand of an administrator of genius, Darius, son of Hystaspes, the vastest empire which had ever appeared in Asia and which lasted two centuries, an immense period if we take into consideration the diverse elements of race, religion and language which had to be controlled and the thirty satraps deputed to distant lands. The civilization of this period is known to us only through foreign testimony or by means of the rather too exiguous national debris. The accounts of the Greeks, historic inscriptions engraved on the rocks by the Achaemenide rulers, acquaint us with the rigid despotism entirely reposing upon the inviolable cult of the royal person, divinity descended upon the earth—a conception common to all the Aryans—attenuated and effaced in Greece by the increasing sentiment of individual dignity; but which in Persia became the sole principle of state, principle of life and principle of death; principle of life in that it was the only one by means of which the Persian state endured and existed, inspiring occasionally heroism and devotion equal to that of the Greek liberty, principle of death in that it degraded the individual and annihilated him. The ruins of Persepolis acquaint us with a

composite art born of royal fantasy which centered in one artificial and powerful unity, all the artistic form which took the emperor's fancy in his province of Syria, Egypt and Asiatic Greece. It is the product of the caprice of an all-powerful dilettante indulging in his taste for the grandiose. In religion we come upon the infiltration of Median dualism brought by the Magians who essayed to establish, by the ascendance of their cult and the manipulation of religious ceremonies, the supremacy of their race lost in politics. Introduced into Persia by Cyrus and by the defeat itself of their country they seized a moment of power under Cambyses, and baffled by Darius they resumed under his successors their slow but sure advance favoured by the double prestige they enjoyed in cult and doctrine.

For the exterior, the struggle between Asia and Europe culminated in the dissolution of the Iranian entity and from its ruins the lieutenants of Alexander carved out empires for themselves. It is this struggle between the genius of Hellas and the Orient which constitutes the main interest of the interior history of the Achaemenide Persia. One of historians of ancient Persia of fine and delicate genius and one who best comprehended modern Persia, Gobineau, expresses his regret that Greece should have triumphed at Marathon,

and he believes that human intellect and civilization would have lost little by the triumph of Xerxes and the East. It is difficult to see in it anything but a mental paradox and an ingenious protest against the systematic disparagement of the East. Whatever may have been the drawbacks and the real blemishes of the Greek civilization, however much it may have degenerated from the grand ideals projected by the genius of its artists on its history, Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea are not so much the victories of Greece as of humanity. It is the success of a more lofty ideal, of thought more prolific and noble, and twenty-five centuries after the victory of Miltiades. Europe and humanity are all the greater for it. With all the prejudices and ignorance, the contempt of Greece for Persia, born to slavery, has been one of the most powerful sources of the progress of humanity. We can regret but one thing. It is that in her wars of vengeance Greece was not sufficiently victorious, we mean that her victory over Persia was merely a material triumph which cost herself more than her victim. Alexander dreamed of fusing together the East and the West. He succeeded but half. He persianised Greece; he could not hellenise Persia.

Macedonian Greece did not borrow from Persia anything beyond the apotheosis of des-

potism and power, the contempt of the individual and extraordinary superstitions. Persia had on her side to borrow from Greece, triumphant and degenerate, many edifying lessons, but she could not assimilate the exalted intelligence or the grander character. Alexander could well plant along his progress through the East half a dozen cities named after himself: he could not leaven the Asiatic masses with the idea of Hellenic liberty which was already extinct.

After the passing away of Alexander's empire the unity of the Iranian dominions was once more established for a moment by the genius of the first Seleucus. But it again crumbled away under his nerveless successors. Towards the year 250 the Parthians, an Aryan tribe on the East of the Caspian, allied to the Persians and Medians in race but up to now without a history, threw off the Greek allegiance. Their king Arsace and his successors gradually conquered all Iran, and installed themselves along the Tigris at Ktesiphon facing the Greek capital of the Seleucides.

The revolt of the Parthians was directed only against the domination, not against the civilisation, of the Greeks. The princes of the house of Arsace seem to have been the disciples of the Seleucides. Their coins are struck after the type in the language and

with the emblems of the Greeks, while they gloried in the title of *Philhellenes*, friends of the Greeks. The Athenian theatre charmed the leisure of the Arsacides. The play of Euripides with the murder of Pentheus was performed before king Hyrodias, when the actor who personated Agave came and threw down before him the severed head of Crassus. This Hellenism must no doubt have been superficial, skin deep, a fashion merely at the Court and among the aristocracy, without any roots struck into the heart of the nation, and which left no impress on the culture of the Iranians. Persia remained passive and refractory. Of the entire triumphal course of Greece athwart Asia all that she retained was a single personal name, the name of Alexander, a high sounding empty appellation of which it learned the history only 10 centuries later, when Persia adopted the legends of the Pseudo Callisthenes and inserted in its victorious annals the fairy tales brought by the Alexandrian story-tellers around the central figure of the great Macedonian. But if the Greek influence upon the Arsacides was not deep enough to resuscitate the genius of Iran, it was powerful enough to arrest the indigenous development.

It is not due solely to bad times or to misfortunes and mishaps that nothing has come down to us of the original literature of

the Arsacides. We learn through the Persians of the middle ages that the four centuries, which elapsed between Alexander and the fall of the Arsacides, are a huge literary hiatus. The Parthians coming from the borders of the Caspian themselves neighbour of the Turanian tribes which furnished them the bulk of their armies transported to the Iranian world the materials and instincts of the desert. They could not manage to work the administrative machinery invented by Darius and for the great centralized unity of the Achaemenides was substituted a sort of military feudalism. The struggle, however, between Asia and Europe continued under the Parthians. Rome took the place of Greece, Crassus, Trojan, Alexander Severus appeared in the room of Cimon, Agesilaus, Alexander of Macedonia, a monotonous duel ending in nothing and in which Europe encountered not only the cumbersome and numerous armies urged on to battle by thongs and lashes but also the light cavalry of the desert, prompt to attack and matchless in flight. The Roman discipline and the rigidity of the legionaries more than once gave way before the brilliant charges or the flying arrows of the Parthians. Thus the Parthians left behind more lasting memories among the Romans than among the Persians themselves. For whilst the pride of Rome

acknowledged in them their equals, perhaps their conquerors admitted them to a half share of the world, the *shahname* disposes of their four centuries in forty lines. All that the *Books of Kings* knows of the Parthians is a few vague uncertain names. Their history is a blank, and according to the poet "the very throne did not belong to anybody," and the centuries passed away "during which men said that they had no longer a kingdom on the earth."

This utter oblivion proves to what extent the Parthians had been strangers in the land of Iran. Besides, the downfall of these hardy warriors, half Turanian, semi-Greek, was greeted like a renaissance of old Persia proper which resumed hegemony with a local dynasty which had remained nearly independent under the Parthian suzerainty, namely the house of Sassan. The new dynasty in order to renew the tradition attached itself, by a forged genealogy, to the last of the Achaemenides.

The Sassanide revolution forms a turning point in the history of Persia. This revolution is not only dynastic but national and religious. The founder of the house, Ardeshir, made or reformed the Iranian nationality by the agency, before all, of religion. We have already said how during the times of the Achaemenides themselves the dualistic religion

of the Medes and the Magians had infused itself into Persia and commenced to absorb the Iranian polytheism from which it had itself originated. It is difficult in the silence of history to follow this muffled movement of the religious propaganda through the Arsacide epoch. We know, however, that its onward march was not arrested, that the Median preachers remained in substantial possession of the religious monopoly, and that they diffused themselves and their cult among all the Iranian provinces and even beyond.

Then a time arrived when the Arsacides themselves became uneasy and contemplated drawing to themselves the singular forces of religion of which they began to appreciate the power and prestige. One of the last of them, Vologeses, attempted to collect together the fragments of the sacred books and to codify the religious literature of Iran. But it was too late. The phil-Hellenic potentates were not worthy of finishing the good work nor of reaping the resultant profit.

Magism found an asylum and a fortress in this province of Persia where erstwhile it was but a redoubtable and suspicious host. The ancient rivalries of the Medes and Persians had time to extinguish themselves during the common and protracted oppression of the

strangers; and in these circumstances devoid of cohesion the creed of the Magians was the only organised moral basis upon which to reconstruct a nationality. The local princes of Persia made themselves their champions. Ardeshir was a *magus* enthroned. Abdicating in favour of his son Shapur he admonished him to this effect:—"Know, O my son that religion and royalty are twin sisters that cannot exist the one without the other, because religion is the basis of royalty and royalty is the protector of religion." Under his second successor, Shapur, was promulgated the official redaction of the sacred texts of the Zend Avesta. This is precisely the period when in the West Christianity mounted the throne with Constantine and elaborated at Nice its definite creed. The Sasanide period is the most important of the ancient periods of history. For it is well illuminated by a mass of documents, Phelvic literature, inscriptions, medals, seals, testimonies of Byzantine, Armenian, Arab, and Persian historians. It sheds its light back into the obscure past and forward on to the centuries which follow. This period is important not for the history of Persia alone but for that of the whole world. Never was the dream of Alexander nearer being realised. Never was the moral inter-penetration of the Orient and the Occident more complete; and it

was Persia which constituted the centre to which every thing recurred and from which everything issued. On the one hand it sent out Manichism to colonise among the Christians of the west and on the other it itself received from Byzantium, along with the Nestorian exiles as well as the last of the Platonists expatriated by the orthodoxy of Justinian, the germs of the philosophy and science of Greeks which, sterile under Alexander and the Parthians, extended their fruitfulness under the last Khosroes and expended themselves subsequently into what is ultimately known as the philosophy of the Arabs. Persia opened itself not only to the west but to the extreme east as well. China which about this time attained its extreme frontiers marched with her and ambassadors went from and to, the court of the "King of Kings" "Son of God" and the court of the "Son of Heaven." India, which in the preceding centuries had sent out her Buddhist ministers as far as Baktria and made its proselytes among the descendants of the lieutenants of Alexander, gave to the greatest Sassanide autocrat its treasures of popular fables, which translated into Persian were disseminated among all the peoples and all the languages of the west feeding all our stories of the middle ages and which have as yet not finished their voyage round the world.

Placed in the centre of three great empires of the time Byzantium, China, and India, the Sassanide monarchy continued for four centuries to be the mart of civilised mental activity. The west, once more in our own days, enters the east but only to break it up and destroy. It was at this unique moment that the world witnessed the equilibrium of four diverse civilisations, fundamentally different and so great each in its own manner. A like equilibrium was not to be seen again.

However, this brilliant civilisation of the Sassanides came to an end in its turn. Two vices conduced to its downfall: despotism and intolerance. Despotism is the tradition in Persia. Based on the heredity of divine right, it has assured centuries of glorious sovereignty under the Achaemenides and the Sassanides. It was to despotism that Persia owed its immeasurable conquests. But it brought terrible reverses in its train. When for the first time since the beginning of the Sasanide dynasty revolt interrupted the line of divine authority, after a terrible anarchy which elevated eight phantom kings to the throne in three years, peace and order were restored. But it was too late. The material resources of the empire were crippled by the convulsions. There was nothing more left of moral resources. The religion of Zoroaster, which in the hand of the

Sasanides was such a powerful instrument of war and policy, had exhausted itself in the service of the state. The work of an exclusive clergy, high in their morality, extremely refined in their dogmas, but very exacting in their cult, it was a religion calculated to be the faith of a sect not a nation, and in pushing to the extreme the notion of purity applied to the world of matter as well as to the world of spirit, it culminated in a system of casuistry, so that with every movement the hand of man dashed against a prohibition. This creed, after all a foreign importation, ridiculous if it was impracticable, became odious when it was sought to be imposed universally upon all. And in proportion as the struggle with Byzantium became more sanguinary, and Christianity grew apace in the interior of the empire, the state-religion grew more oppressive and pretended to expect from the lay community observances incumbent upon ascetics. The tide of persecution ran high, involving not only the Christians and Jews, not only minor sects like that of Mani, not only socialistic and communistic orders like that of Mazdak, not only free thinkers and the incredulous, but also the lukewarm and the indifferent. A prime minister was put to death because he buried his wife instead of exposing her corpse to the beasts of prey as required by the Avesta,

Hence to a great measure the extraordinary rapidity with which Persia, conquered by the Arabs, embraced Islam. The conquest and the conversion of Persia by the Arabs open the second-period of the History of Iran. From the political standpoint the severance of the continuity is complete between the two epochs. The independence of Iran had come to an end. No doubt some national dynasties sporadically uprose which attached themselves to the memories and the legislature of Persia before the advent of Islam. But none of them endured long. It was the Arabs, the Turks, the Moghals, the Afgans, who by turns wore the diadem of Jamshid. At present it is a Turkish tribe, to-morrow it may be the Russians. The internal revolution has not been less profound than the external alterations. Save for a few of the faithful, the old religion has been extirpated, this remnant of the old faith living in squalor and misery in a few villages of Kirman. The religion brought in by these "lizard-eaters," whom the great monarchs of yore could not sufficiently detest, has quenched the fires in the temples, torn up the Zend Avesta and instead has installed in the places of worship an unknown idiom. If the national language of Persia has subsisted among the people it has received and assimilated marks of slavery and has renewed its lexicon in

honor of the language of its conquerors. If, however, we look closer into Persia, we shall observe that the national element has disappeared more on the surface than from the interior or the heart and that the country in accepting the foreign yoke, has more transformed its conquerors than has been changed itself, that it has adapted its life and its new faith to its ancestral habits and hereditary traditions, and that it has not been said without reason that for the bulk of the Muslim world Persia is outside of Islam.

Islam indeed as practised in Persia is no Islam at all. It is the ancient religion of Persia clothed in Mussulman formulas. It is not the sacerdotal religion, an artificial work which never appealed to the conscience of the people, but it represents the popular living faith which had nothing in common with the former save the primitive basis on which both were reared. Again in the anarchy of modern Persia religious evolution is the sole thread which upholds the national spirit, and to give one an approximate idea of the life of the Iranians in the second period it is more simple and more certain to begin from within than from without, from the history of thought rather than from the incoherent succession of political revolutions.

On the morrow of its defeat Persia was proselytised *en masse* owing to diverse reasons which resolved themselves into two cardinal ones :—firstly, Islam was the religion of the masters ; and secondly, Persia had little hold on the ancient state-religion. Moreover the two creeds had a sufficient number of points of contract so that the transition from one to the other did not offer any serious difficulties either as regards the dogma or the cult or the mythology. The old Aryan polytheism had already arrived in Mazdaism, as near as possible, as the semitic dogma, and Allah was only Ormuzd who kept at a greater distance from his creatures. The Arab cult in its elementary simplicity was a deliverance with respect to the Mazdian ritual, and from a more exalted stand-point the exhortations to charity inculcated in the Avesta were replaced by more than their equivalent in the tithe to be set apart for the poor as enjoined in the Koran. As for the Arab mythology, therein the Persians found what they had already been acquainted with : all the legends touching the dissolution of the world, heaven and hell, which Mahomed had borrowed from them, some direct, some mediately, through the mythologies of the Jews and Christians.

Of the three elements of religion—dogma, cult and mythology—mythology offers the

greatest resistance and is the only ingredient which a people stubbornly refuses to give up even when they believe themselves to be converts to an alien faith. But as regards Persia it transported in a body its mythology into the new religion. Mahomed became an heir to Zoroaster Dejjal and the anti-Christ became Ahriman and the serpent Zohak, the *saoshyant* the son still to be born to the prophet and who is to inaugurate eternal life at the end of time assumed in the person of the Arab *Mahdi* the role of a Vates promising millenium to mankind. The whole creation of genii and demons of *jins* and *devs*, of *paris* who animate the waters and inhabit the mountains and the desert, continued to reign in peace in their ultra-human empire as if no change had come over the temples. For the mass of the people nothing was changed, neither the heavens above nor the earth below nor the infernal regions beneath. All that they had to learn new were two names, Allah and Mahomed, and the eight words of the profession of Islamic faith, a succedanium for the twenty-one syllables of the holy *Honver*.

The reaction went still further and the principles of political theology which had dominated ancient Persia revived and re-asserted their empire. In theory all power in Persia appertained to the King, son of God,

invested by his eternal suppra-terrestrial origin with divine glory or *Farri Yazdan*. Thanks to the political revolutions Persia transferred to the Arab Ali, the legitimate heir of Mahomed excluded from the Khalifat, all the splendours and saintliness of the old national royalty. What Persia formerly called in its protocols *shah bagi Minocher*. "The Divine King—son of Heaven" and knew in its sacred books as *Ahu ratu cha* the Lord and Master, lord of of the mundane world and guide of the spiritual existence—this is at present included and comprehended in the Arabic word *Imam*, the head, which is the simplest title that could be imagined and one which at the same time is the most august because it embodies the whole sovereignty, material and spiritual of the world. With respect to the Khalifs elevated by the blind clamour of the masses, by intrigue and crime, it established the hereditary right of the Imam Ali, infallible and sacred to God. At his death Persia pressed round his two sons Hasan and Husain and then their descendants. Husain had espoused the daughter of the last king of the line of Sassan so that the Imamatus became fixed in his blood by a double divine right and a union of ancient Persia and Islam was sealed in the blood of Husain shed on the plains of Kerbela. The revolution which subverted the usurpers

of the house of the Omeyyades to the advantage of the Abbasides, cousins of the prophet, has been the work of Persia. If it did not succeed in elevating to power its favourite family in whose behalf it fought it at least helped to bring about the triumph of its principles.

The first Abbasides raised to the throne by Persia surrounded themselves with Persians. Their first ministers, the Barmecides, were suspected of being at heart Zoroastrians in religion. The days of the Khosroes revived. The Hellonic traditions formerly introduced into Ktesiphon by the Nestorians and the Neoplatonists were renewed with éclat after a gap of two centuries. Greek philosophy echoed in the palace of Baghdad just as formerly under Anoshirvan it had reverberated in the halls of Ktesiphon. Something amounting to freedom of thought was prevalent, and taste for the sciences.

Thus commenced what it has pleased some people to call the Arab philosophy but what could be more properly named, to borrow the expression of Renan, the Greco-Sassinide philosophy, for what is Arab in it is only the language, the main spring is Greek and those who worked it were the Persians or the Syrians who resumed the impulse imparted by

the Sassinide. Most of the great authors of the best period of Arabic literature, those who wrote on philosophy, history, geography, grammar, all save poets, were Persians. The Abbasides were veritable Sassinides of Arab blood.

With the successors of Mamun, orthodoxy again took the upper hand in the State, for the orthodox knew well that they had no *raison d'être* in the doctrine of the Shiah. But this triumph of orthodoxy coincides with the dissolution of the Khalifat, exhausted because of its immensity. The Persian provinces separated themselves and formed their independent dynasties with the Taherides, the Saffarides, the Samanides, the Bouides. That was the reawakening of the national feelings. All these founders of the dynasties, insurgent governors or simple adventurers pitted against the prestige of the Khalifat of Bagdad the memories of the ages preceding Islam in order to be followed by the nation in a struggle which had the semblance of a crusade against foreigners. The Samanides coming from beyond the Oxus, of a suspicious origin, perhaps Tartars, gave themselves out to be the descendants of the last hero of the Sassinide epoch, Behram Chobin, who had died in exile among the Turks. The Bouides, who established themselves in Media while the

Samanides held a footing in Bactria and who during one century held in their hands as the mayors of the palace the Khalifs and the Khalifat, pretended to be the direct descendants of the Sassinides. And Persia had once more a literature of its own after three centuries of silence.

The Khalifs attempted to stifle in Persia the national tongue. The Pehlvi script was proscribed. The language of the Koran became the language of the administration and thus naturally became the medium of science, theology, poesy, and thought in general. But with the national dynasties Persian again acquired the ascendancy from which it has not descended and penetrated the heart of literature. The poets no doubt still continued the language of Mahomed and the rhythm of the singers of the desert out of respect for the prophet, but they commenced to cast the vulgar dialect into the mould of Arab poetry and a national literature was formed round the nucleus of alien poetry just as in Europe several centuries later were shaped the compositions of Petrarch and Dante on the support of Latin tradition. The Kasida and the Gazal charmed under a Persian disguise, with their fantasies and conceits, the trans-Oxian Court of the Samanides. The renaissance of national Persian poetry is connected with the name of the third ruler of this

house, Nasar bin Ahmed. His favorite is the first, as regards time, of the Persian poets, Rudagi, the blind minstrel of Bukhara.

The school of Rudagi and his successors is Persian only in language, the inspiration and the models are Arabian. Hence it was thrown into the shade by a poesy genuinely national, in matter and material, which arose about the same time and under the patronage of the same Samanides—the epic poetry. Among the villages remaining more faithful to the memories of olden times there survived an oral tradition, a body of stories and legends of a historic nature as old as Iran and which followed the entire history of the land from the beginning to the Sassanides. Already the last Sassanides, as if by a presentiment of the approaching end of the national drama, had collected and edited in the current idiom of the time, Pehlvi, all this epic treasure which had been floating about and scattered. Then came the terrific crash and the Arab and the epic Arab of Persia slumbered in oblivion. The national dynasties resumed the enterprise of the vanished Sassanides. The old now unintelligible book was translated into Persian under the ephemeral house of the Suffarides. Their successors, the Samanides, who overthrew the former, continued it, calling to the aid of national thought the prestige of poetry,

and the Persian *Book of Kings* commenced to receive a poetic form under the pen of a Gueber poet name Dakiki. He was slain at the beginning of his undertaking. Meanwhile the Samanides gave way before a new line of rulers founded by a Turkish slave, that of the Ghaznavides. The national work was brought to a successful issue under the Turkish princes especially under the greatest of them, Mahmood, the Gaznavide, a fanatic despot, a stranger to toleration but a double dealer in politics, who persecuted the Shias in the name of the principles of Bagdad and broke the last bonds which united Persia to the Khalifat, who imposed the Koran with the help of the Sword but cast out the Arab from the government to the advantage of the Persian. It was at his court and under his mandate that Firdausi composed the Shah-name. The Persian epopee was fixed. The ancient tradition was rescued by the lucky genius of a poet and Persia once again became conscious of herself.

Unfortunately this resuscitation of conscience was not the renovation of her happy destiny. For the ill-starred Persia, the centuries of anarchy and chaos coincided with the great movement which agitated the barbarians of central Asia and hurled them towards the east. As far back as its memory could go, Persia had for her neighbours the uncouth

nomads of Turkistan. But in the ancient times she had kept them on the other side of the Oxus. She had crossed the barriers of the great river and the desert, had planted her colonies among the barbarians, there reared cities and installed the sacred fire in new built temples. Throughout the primeval portion of the epic we hear a paean of triumph of Iran over Turan. But now her expansive energy collapsed.

Such, nevertheless, was the potency of the traditions of civilization in Persia, that thrice overwhelmed, three times she asserted her supremacy over her conquerors and had her ruins repaired by their own hands. Three times she absorbed her assailants, too insignificant in numbers to constitute anything save a governing caste, too savage to introduce or support a civilisation, though politic enough to recognise the value of the traditions of Persia. The Seljuicides of the eleventh century were Turks but their administrators were Persians. Besides, these barbarians had a sense of admiration for the products of the mind. The great Turk with bags of gold about his sofa threw handfuls to the bards who sang around him, Under the third Seljuicide, Malikshah, the cities were filled with mosques and colleges. His astronomers anticipated by five centuries the reform of the Gregorian calendar and Omar Khayyam wrote his quatrains.

On the fall of the Seljuicides' ten little local dynasties, the Turkish Atabegs during one century rent themselves and rent Persia asunder. Still here and there at the court of one or other of them an hour of repose and tranquility dawned on some poetic oasis. Nizami wrote his divan at the court of the Atabegs of Shirvan and it was for an Atabek of Shiraz that Sadi composed his Gulistan. A period was put to the anarchy in the XIIIth century by the inroad of the Mongols who established tranquility and reduced Persia to a wilderness, but the Mongols themselves in their turn succumbed to her charm. The ferocious Halagu founded the observatory of Meraga and had the Ilkanian tables prepared by Nasir-ud-din. The Mongols embraced the religion of their subjects and civilised themselves. Another violent and new personification of terror took up the work of destruction and the Trans-Oxian province threw up Tamurlane, who marked his passage from the Oxus to the Euphrates with pyramids of human heads. His son Shah Rukh attempted to repair the evil perpetrated by his father, rebuilding Merv and Herat. One of his grandsons has given his name to the astronomical tables of Ulughbeg, and another, Baisangher, prepared the first critical edition of the Shah-name. At the court of the rulers of

Herat, descendants of Tamurlane, Persian thought cast the last lustre under the auspices of a Turkish Mæccenas, the vazir Alisher, himself a poet who formed the Turkish poetry on the model of the Persian. He had for his friend the last great poet of Persia, Jami, the author of the romance of Sufism. He took under his patronage the historian Mirkhund and his son Khundmir, the last of the great chroniclers. Under him Daolatshah wrote his biography of poets, This is the period when the renaissance commenced in the West.

These three centuries of Turkish, Tartar, and Mongol domination developed in Persia a poetry of rare originality such as has hardly a parallel elsewhere. This is the poetry of Sufism or Persian mysticism which succeeded the epic poetry. In the wake of Firdausi followed an epic school just as was the case with the Illiad of Greece. The Book of Kings generated a legion of secondary epics called Námés which along with the principal poem formed a cycle following up its heroes and their descendants in the rest of their history. This poetic movement at first nourished by popular traditions presently degenerated into pure fiction in proportion as it addressed itself to the imagination in order to renew the founts of semi-historic legends which had run dry. The epic turned into the romance of ad-

ventures and with Nizami it became a string of mystic moralities.

All that Persia lost in her epic poetry she gained in her mystic. The times favoured the change. The national epic had no longer any sense since there was no longer a nation to speak of. The only question for Persia to know was whether she was to obey a Turk or a Mongol, a white horde or a black one. There was no mother-country either in the present or in the future. The national dream was nothing more than a memory in place of an aspiration. Poetry, devoid of royalty, sought refuge in the ideal and the ideal was impure and mixed, with particles of reality in it which were of a base quality. For noble elements there was no longer a place in the world of Persia. Hence this indefinable poetry of Sufism which is, according to the author and the time, now an effusion of supreme piety, now a bold effort on part of man to identify himself with God, to annihilate himself into him, the ecstasy of suffering philosophy charged with the thoughts of the infinite ; once more the transparent veil of a despicable incredulity which threw pell mell all the former of religion including Islam, at the feet of royalty ; again the evangel of the epicure, the mystic chain of human love in its less exalted shape.

The mystic poetry of other peoples offers no analogy ; not even that of the Hindus, from whom perhaps the Persians borrowed their first model through the conquest of the Ghaznavides. Europe, too, has her mystic poets but mysticism there has not constituted all its poetry. In Persia, commencing from a certain epoch, it has. It is to Sufism that we must turn for the most penetrating of Persian thoughts and thinkers, like Jalaluddin Rumi, the dervish of Iconium whose *Masnavi* is the Bible of Sufism ; Muhammed Sabisteri whose *Garden of Mystery* is its manual ; Saaddi, the most human and the most accessible of them all, more of a moralist than a mystic and in whom the well of Sufism serves only to exalt the light of life with a penumbra of mystery ; Hafiz the Anacreon, the Horace, the Voltaire of Persia ; and finally one of the first in point of time and the greatest of them all in most respects, the mathematician Omar Khayyam, who cast into the brilliant and fixed mould of his quatrains all the contempt of science and meditation for the foolishness or the hypocrisy of mankind, all the agonies of a heart under the double oppression of nature and infinity, all the revolt of man against his maker.

This Sufic poetry is the glory of Persia. At the same time it is a token of its decadence. It is wanting in the accent of manly dignity.

It builds up the metaphysical grandeur of man on his moral abasement. The theme of detachment from the world with all the beautiful formulas in which it is enveloped is next of kin to egoism, for all these renunciations resolve in a marvellous way into the single problem of how to live and how to live long through the terrors of the Turk or the Tartar. It is inexhaustible in epithets of adoration for its Mongol masters quite as much as for its transcendent Divinity. Hafiz disarmed the savage Tamurlane in the sack of Shiraz and made of him a patron and protector. It is thus that Sufism with all its beauties and seductive attractions has neither endeavoured nor contemplated the elevation of character. It is the poetry of the nation which has no morrow for which to prepare. It helps to pass away life but not to live.

After Jami who closed the great mystic period just as Nazami had closed the great epic period, Sufism became, as before did the epic, a branch of literature, which it still is. As the epic lost itself in interminable romance of adventure of a repulsive monotony, Sufism degraded itself into endless allegories of a revolting nature. All poetry was moulded after its fashion, a fashion which is most refractory to inspiration when it is not handled by a true poetic genius. At the close of the

18th century appeared as a rare accident a genuine poet, Hatif of Ispahan, whose lucid language and clear thoughts distinguished themselves from the modish jargon of centuries.

After the successors of Tamurlane in the 16th century the last great dynasty of Persia, that of the Sufis, came to power. The Sufis were descended or pretended to be descended from Ali. They introduced definitely into Persia the cult of Ali and the Shia doctrine. This was a signal for the great wars between Persia and Turkey. To the hatred of race and political rivalries was added the hatred of religion; the Sultan, the heir of the Khalifat of Bagdad being the representative of Sunni Orthodoxy. The struggle between the Sultan and the great Sufi which led Persia towards the West left her effete and after the reign of Shah Abbas it was ripe for new barbarians. In the beginning of the 18th century, in 1722 to be more precise, millions of Afghans inundated the land, broke its armies, covered it with ruins, and during a reign of seven years slew a million of men. An adventurer of the Turkish race, an archbrigand Nadir Shah by name, became the liberator and hero of Persia, stretched its confines from the Oxus to the Tigris and revived in the 18th century beyond the Indus the horrors of the Ghaznavide, and of Tamurlane. He dreamed for a moment to establish

a unity of the Musulman world and to reconcile the conflicting Shias and Sunnis into a large faith of his own invention. With him Persia fell once more. The Turkish tribes by turns supplied Persia with a master, the clan of the Zends, who filled the latter half of the 18th century, and then the house of the Kajars which holds the reins to this day.

The dynasty of the Kajars marked the entrance on the territory of Persia of a new host with whom her destinies since then have been entangled, an adversary who always advances and never falls back, Russia. Since 1813 while Moscow was still in flames, by the conquest of Daghestan and Shirvan it threw back Persia beyond the Caucasus, which it pierced, and found itself installed on the Iranian soil. Eleven years later by the treaty of Turkmanshai it came to Armenia's turn and Russia alone has the right to possess naval fleets in the Caspian which has become a Russian lake. From that day downwards the Ambassador of Tehran plays the part of an English Resident at the Court of an Indian Raja. The subjugation of the Kars in the West in 1878 and of Merv in 1883 have hemmed in Persia on the right and the left rendering a formal annexation unnecessary. All that we are concerned to know is whether the South, more accessible to England and on

which it has already laid its hand on several places, will follow the North or will fall into the state of a common vassal and whether we shall see in our days the ancient division between Media and Persia. Be that as it may, what with the continued aggrandisements of Russia and the intermittent aggrandisements of England, Persia as a political power is extinct.

The political reprieve brought about by the Sufis did not result in the regeneration of thought. But the last century which marks the end of Persia has had its revival and two-fold revival, literary and religious. The funeral ceremonies by which Persia celebrates every year for centuries the fatal day of the 10th of Mohorrum, when the son of Ali breathed his last at Kerbela, have developed a popular theatre and produced a sincere poetry, dramatic and human, which is worth all the rhetoric of the poets. During the same times an attempt at religious renovation was made, the religion of Babiism. Demoralised for centuries by ten foreign conquests, by the yoke of a composite religion in which she believed just enough to persecute, by the enervating influence of a mystical philosophy which disabled men for action and divested life of all aim and object. Persia has been making unexpected efforts for the last 55 years to re-

make for herself a virile ideal. Babiism has little of originality in its dogmas and mythology. Its mystic doctrine takes its rise from Sufism and the old sects of the Aliides formed round the dogma of divine incarnation. But the morality it inculcates is a revolution. It has the ethics of the West. It suppresses lawful impurities which are a great barrier dividing Islam from Christendom. It denounces polygamy, the fruitful source of Oriental degeneration. It seeks to reconstitute the family and it elevates man and in elevating him exalts woman up to his level. Babiism which diffused itself in less than five years from one end of Persia to another, which was bathed in 1852 in the blood of its martyrs, has been silently progressing and propagating itself. If Persia is to be at all regenerate, it will be through this new faith.

This very imperfect sketch of the long history of Persian civilization will at least give the reader an idea of the interest it offers in the general history of human culture. Of all the nations of Asia, Persia is the one which has the most to teach to the historian, inasmuch as the country has lived throughout all its various periods in touch with several great civilizations from which it has borrowed or to which it has lent and which refer us to it or to which Persia refers us. Intima-

tely connected by turns with primitive India, Assyria, Sousa, Babylon, with Lydia, Greece and Egypt, with Rome and Byzantium, coming in close contact with Arabs, Turks and Mongols, now thrown out towards the West, now hurled back to the East, Persia has been the *carrefour* of races, religions, and civilizations. China itself has left its impress upon the land.

We can imagine, accordingly, what a variety of subjects of study we have before us, which concern themselves not with history alone but with languages, religions, literature and art. In the field of linguistics, we encounter the most magnificent province of study which Aryan philology commands, for a series of authentic records and documents permits us to follow the language spoken since the age of Cyrus down to our own days, in all its developments through the Achaeminide period, the Pehlvi of the Sassanides, the Persian of modern Persia. We may investigate the religions which united this speech with the language of the Zend Avesta and more or less with the Armenian family of languages on the one hand and the Indian branch on the other. This philology will be required to decipher ancient documents, Persian and Pehlvi inscriptions, the Zend Avesta, the medals and seals of the Sassanides.

The religion has a bearing on all the great known religious systems. We can reconstruct by instituting a comparison with India and Vedism, the prime main spring of Iranian beliefs and examine the forms they have assumed in Persia and Media and observe the metamorphoses through which they have acquired the dualistic shape. The philologist may inquire to what influences of the Semitic polytheism of Babylon it has been subjected, search the action and reaction exercised mutually by the Iranian religion and biblical Judaism of the times of Cyrus and the Rabbinical Judaism of the Sassanides era, determine what it has lent to nascent Christianity and the gnostics of the first century and the elements it has taken over in turn, and the ingredients it has permitted to be assimilated to itself from the Greek and Alexandrian philosophy. The investigator may draw up a history of the Iranian bible and Parsi casuistry and trace the modern evolution of Mazdaism among the Guebres of Persia and the religious exiles in India. The student of comparative religion will analyse it into what it has borrowed from the new creed of Islam forced on Iran and what it has preserved from old. And finally, the literature despite the immense gaps in the ancient period, presents a vast subject, whether one devotes oneself to

the religious scripts of Persia of yore and the Parsis of to-day, or, to the epic or the lyric poetry or to the historical writings not to mention twenty subsidiary branches of research which in reality are secondary only because of the paucity of documents and not their own importance,—such for instance as the history of the Persian art, the architecture borrowed from Assyria, Greece, Egypt, Rome and lent to Byzantium and the Arabs, the painting oscillating between Byzantium and China, the ceramic a loan from the Chinese.

As for the history of the Persian epic, the study belongs in matter to antiquity, in form to modern ages. It represents in continuity the genius of Persia through its entire history and its evolution.

THE INFLUENCE OF PARSISM ON ISLAM.

BY PROFESSOR I. GOLDZIER.

(Translated by G. K. Nariman.)

For long we have been content with the convenient assertion: Islam has sprung up all of a sudden full into broad daylight.

The more we proceed with critical examination of the oldest documents of Islam, the more we are convinced that the Musalman tradition, *hadith*, which chronologically is, after the Qoran, the most ancient source of our information, does not carry us up to the early infancy of Islam except in a very feeble way.¹ It often rather presents us with conflicting tendencies.

In utilising the rich material of this tradition in which the Moslems find documents corroborating their sacred book we must go far beyond the critical method which the Musalman school has practised in a rational manner since the second century of the *hijira*.

We have become more strict and more circumspect with regard to this literature. No one who is seriously engaged in Islamic studies would venture to borrow at hazard from this source the maxims attributed to Muhammad and his companions for the purpose of drawing

¹ Snouck Hurgronje in *Litteraturblatt für Orientalische Philologie* (1884).

a picture of the ancient state of affairs and the primitive doctrines of Islam. The modern historical critic puts us on our guard against this antedeluvian fashion. The struggles of the political and religious parties make these documents intelligible to us—the aspirations which this or that saying of Muhammad or this or that information regarding a companion of the Prophet must have served to support or combat.

While we occupy ourselves with the evolution of Islam due to internal forces we have at the same time to direct our attention to the foreign influences which had a determining importance on the formation and development of Islam.

Every elementary manual of the middle ages teaches us that from its first beginning Islam was subject to Jewish and Christian influences and that Muhammad himself worked upon the data of the Jews and Christians. These influences continued to assert themselves in a positive or negative manner even during the first generations which came after the death of the Prophet. The intervention of Jewish and Christian elements have always been admitted in Islam without acknowledgement.² Yet the usages of the Jews and Chris-

² *Muhammedanische Studien* 11, 382-400: *Hadith and Neues Testament*.

tians were repudiated. They were discarded and reaction set up against them. The common formula of the time is *Khalifuhum*,—"distinguish yourselves from them." This reaction itself must be considered as a symptom of the spiritual relationship and of intimate influence.

Upto now little attention has been directed to one of the most important elements in the religious development of Islam, the Persian element. It has exercised under the dual form of loan and reaction a determining influence on the formation of the character of Islam. The influence of Parsism on Islam is one of the first questions which will suggest itself to any one occupied with our subject of study. To be adequately treated it requires a knowledge equally profound of the Persian and the Musalman religions. M. Blochet is the only one who up to now has broached the question in some of the articles published in the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* and who has furnished important materials for the solution of the problem.³ I take the liberty to single out in particular from the standpoint of philology, quite as much as that of the science of religions, the excellent study in which he has shown the Persian origin

³ *Revue des Études Juives*, XXVIII, 75 f.

of the Musalman conception of Borak, the winged horse on which the Prophet has been supposed to have accomplished his ascension.⁴

One of the most fascinating chapters of the history of civilization consists in investigating the varied influences which the Sasanian civilization has exercised on different sections of humanity geographically separated from one another. Even in the language and the artistic monument of the nation to which I belong we may observe remarkable traces of this influence. Since the times of the migration of the ancient Hungarians before they penetrated into the regions limited by the Karpathian mountains we have continued to employ upto this day, to confine myself to religious nomenclature, words borrowed from Persia to designate God, namely Isten, Persian Izadan; the devil or dog, Persian druj; and in profane usage devaj, wanton, is a remnant of daeva. Our archæologists and the historians of our art discover from time to time fresh vestiges of Persian elements in the ancient monuments of our art.

A similar influence on Arabism lies on the surface. It was the immediate and permanent contact with Sasanian culture which gave to the Arabs, who were solely confined

⁴ V, XXXVIII and XI of the Revue.

to poetry, the first impulse which permitted the expansion of a deeper intellectual life. I adhere for instance to my thesis which has been accepted by Professor Brockelmann in his history of Arab Literature that the writing of history on part of the Arabs has its roots in the literature of the royal annals of the Persians, that there would be no Arab historians if the first impulse had not been received by Arab litterateurs from Persia, and that it was this impulse which led them to make researches and preserve the historic memory of their own nation.⁵ The ante-Islamian Arabs were devoid of all sense of history. Their memory of the most ancient events does not go beyond the sixth Christian century, save for the traditions regarding the migrations of the southern tribes of Arabia towards the north. The events of the nearest past were veiled to them and floated in the clouds of myths.

It was contact with Persian culture, contact which goes back to the remotest period of Islam, which decided the direction and the end of the development of the intellectual life of the Arabs.⁶

⁵ Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, I, p. 134.

⁶ Khalif Usman invited at his Court the Christian Abu Zubeid Harimla ibn Mundhir who had before the appearance of the Prophet, "visited the Kings of Persia and knew their manners," *min zuwawir al muluk wa khasratan muluk al ajam wa kamt aliman bi sayarihim.*" Aghani xi p. 24.

The action of the Persian element on the religious formation was very far-reaching as soon as Islam had established itself in the geographical regions of ancient Parsism and had carried to the worshippers of Zoroaster, with the aid of the sword, the faith of the Prophet of Mecca and Medina. The occupation of Irak by the Musalmans constitutes one of the most decisive factors in the religious formation of Islam.

Persian theologians introduced into the religion lately adopted their traditional points of view. The conquerors enriched the poverty of their own fundamentals by elements procured for them by the experience of a profoundly religious way of life, the way of the Persians whom they had defeated. That is why we cannot attach too much importance for the formation of Islam to the intellectual movement which was born in Irak and which was connected with the schools of Basra and Kufa. There is no room for surprise if this local development carried in its current many a Persian element.⁷

These influences attained to their complete extent of development when the Musalman state underwent the great revolution about the year 128 of its era and the house of

7 Cp. Blochet, R. H, R. xxxviii, p. 447.

the Umayyads fell from power to give place to the Abbasides. It was not merely the political overthrow of a dynasty. 't was a religious revolution. It was a momentous religious upheaval. In place of the mundane government of the Umayyads who had conserved the Arab traditions in their residence at Damascus on the borders of the desert, the theocratic regime of the Abbasides founded a power on principles at once political and ecclesiastical. They fixed their residence at Anbar and at Bagdad, the centre of the Sasanide kingdom which Islam had subverted. They adopted the traditions of the Sasanides. Their title was no longer that of an Arab Shaikh ; it was that of king of Persia. They based their authority on the principle of legitimacy as " children of the Prophet " exactly as in the Sasanian times the Persian power was reared on legitimacy. Like the Sasanides, the Abbasides set themselves to restore the religion fallen into ruins under their predecessors. Their kingdom was an ecclesiastical state. They themselves were not secular chieftains but religious heads. They considered themselves, so to say, Baghi, divine, like the Sasanides ; for the latter represented themselves as such on their coins.⁸

⁸ Journal Asiatique 1895, 1, p. 167; Zeitschrift der d. Morhenl. Ges xx1 (1867), p. 429, 458, J. Darmesteter *Coup d'oeil sur l'histoire de la Perse*,* (Paris 1885), p. 49, Sacred Books of the East, XXIV, p. 171.

In their entourage, there was a perfect consciousness of the relation between the new institution of the Khalifs and the conception of Persian kingship. While the Abbaside Khalif Abdul Malek censured the poet at his court for employing the attributes of a Persian king in glorifying him—it was only a matter of the term diadem, *taj*,⁹—an Abbaside prince and poet thus celebrates the Khalif in a historic poem dedicated to him: “He resembles the Persian Ardeshir when he restored a destroyed kingdom.”¹⁰ This restoration was linked from the first with the idea now formed of the dignity of Khalif. Not only their Court, their administrative organisation, the system of the offices of state and the etiquette were in conformity with the model of the Persian Empire, the intrinsic signification of khalifat came to be formulated after the Persian ideal: they were the guardians of divine economy, the state turned into a religious institution, a universal church at the head of which the legitimate successor of the Prophet, the

9 Aghani iv, 158.

Op Bratke *Religions gesprach am Hohe der Sassaniden* 193, note 1, in the eyes of the Arabs the *taj* was the characteristic attribute of the Persian royal dignity, cp Noeldeke *Fünf Mullakat* I, 36, about Anr Ibn Kulthum. Legends were composed about the *taj* of Khushru (Ibn Hisham, p. 42, 4).

10 Diwan or Abdullah al-Mutazz I, p. 128. 15. This poem was published separately by M. Lang in Z. D. M. G. for 1886 p. 563.

“Khalif Allah” found himself. Highest consideration was secured for the church by the state. A government truly worthy of the name must be in accord with religion; government is related to religion, thanks to the perfect union with it; hence one may say that government and religion are identical and that religion is the government of the people.¹¹ These are entirely Musalman maxims. And the book from which they are extracted is not by a Musalman legislator but is a Pahlavi book, the Dinkard, dating from the last days of productive Parsism.

The Moslem idea of theocracy was born in Persian atmosphere and in its application and practical effect, it breathed the spirit of Persian tradition. In place of confessional indifference which dominated the Umayyads, it was confessionalism which became the guiding principle of government under the Abbasides. The Umayyads treated with sovereign contempt the theologians who attempted to thwart¹² them; the Abbasides made the dogma their special care. They inaugurated their rule by enforcing and preserving the *sunna* in government and they ended by perse-

¹¹ Justi, *Geschichte des alten Persiens* (Berlin 1879). As regards Persian political doctrines, cp. Wilhelm, *Königtum und Priesterthum im alten Iran*, Z. D. M. G., 1886, p. 102.

¹² *Mohammedanischen Studien* 11, p. 132.

cuting the heretics and those who differed from them in thought. I will content myself with the mention of their persecution of the Zendiks¹³, as the heretics were called after the Persian vogue, and who soon after the accession of the Abbasides to power became victims of a kind of Moslem inquisition.¹⁴

“ God has girded the Abbasides with two swords, one for the defence and extension of the frontiers of the state, the other for the assertion of the faith in its dogmatic aspect and to chastise infidelity and heresy.¹⁵ The Persian distinction of *beh-din*¹⁶ and *bad-din*, good creed and bad creed, became a vital principle of Islam. It did not appertain to the original Arab movement which found its continuance in the confessional indifferentism of the Umayyads.

If the Persian influence manifested itself in the transformation of the entire public spirit of Islam it has also left vestiges in certain matters of legal detail.

Without going so far as to maintain with the great master of Persian philology. Frederic Spiegel¹⁷, that the very roots of Moslem tra-

13 *Actes du XI Congress des Orientalistes*, third section, p. 70, note 3.*

14 *Transactions of the 11th Congress of Orientalists.*

* See p. 135 Tr.

15 *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgen* lxiii, 1899 p. 325, note 3,

16 Spiegel *Die Traditionelle Literaturen der Parsenii*, p. 78.

17 *Loc. cit.* p. 174.

dition, the fundamental form of its religious precepts, plunge into Parsism, we cannot but recognise in our study of the Hadith the Persian ingredient in several peculiarities of its contents.

It does not suffice for us to weight the importance which Irak, the classic land of ancient Persian culture enjoyed. We have equally to consider the part taken by the populace of this country in the development of the spirit of Islam,—their fathers were still faithful followers of the religion of Zoroaster and they introduced into the new confession all the piety of Parsism.

It may not interest the general reader to have the details of a series of analogies between the religious and ritualistic peculiarities of the Moslem traditional literature and the prescriptions of the Persian religion. The chapter concerning purity and impurity from the point of view of ritual, in so far as it did not concern the ancient pagan *taboos* which survived in Islam, saw the light of day under the influence of the religious notions of Persia.

The Persian idea, which is likewise found in Judaism, of the defilement attaching to the dead body is well known. I will simply cite the following passage as an instance of Moslem reaction, from the *Hadith*.

"A client of the Ansarian, Abu Wahwah relates: We had washed a corpse. Then we wanted to purify ourselves by a bath. But Abu Wahwah came forward and said, by God, we are not defiled, neither as living nor as dead."¹⁸

This is an illustration of the opposition to the infiltration of Persian usages among the Arabs. We will now produce some instances of the abiding Parsi influence on Islam at a period subsequent to Muhammad's.

From very remote times in Islam only the reciting of the sacred texts, particularly the Qoran, passed for an act of religious merit. There is no question of prayers or religious formulæ. It is the reading personal or by others of the Revealed Book or large portions from it that are necessary. Now those who are acquainted with Musalman literature must have often read at the close of the commentary on each *surat*, notes on the merits and the reward earned by reciting a separate chapter or the whole of the Qoran.¹⁹ This idea of the merit acquired by the reading of the text is an echo of the Persian belief in the merit of reciting the Vendidad. "A short Yasna as well as the long Vendidad-sadeh serves for being read in the interests of any individual either

¹⁸ *Usd al ghaiba* v. p. 320.

¹⁹ *Muhammedanischen Studien* ii, 156.

dead, who by it secures the remission of his sins, or alive, for whom it serves the same end. For as it is not possible for a man to live on the earth without committing a sin, it is necessary to have read the Vendidad from time to time to be relieved of the demerits."²⁰ And now the recital of his sacred Book would secure for the Musalman the same results for the salvation of his soul. Just like the Parsis, the reading of the holy Book is practised by the Musalmans for several days after the death of the member of a family. In our own days we observe this custom of *hiraye* in Musalman families at a condolence visit. The Persian origin of the practice will be confirmed by reference to M. Soderblom's work on the Fravashis in connection with the Parsi feast the dead.²¹

I have on another occasion shown how severely Musalman ethics condemn expressions of mourning for the dead. I will not reproduce the sentences of the Prophet in which this idea is indicated. I will call attention to the striking resemblance offered by Parsism on this point.

The eschtological doctrine of the *mizan* or balance among the Moslems for the purpose

²⁰ Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde* 111, 577.

²¹ R. H. R. xxix, 241.

of weighing the good and bad actions of a man after his death is borrowed from Parsism (Prof. William Jackson has shown the Aryan origin of this idea)²². Just as in the sacred books of the Parsis,²³ the value of the good and bad deeds is calculated in Islam²⁴ as so many units in weight. "One *kintar* of good deeds shall be counted to his credit who reads a thousand verses of the Qoran in a night."²⁵ The Prophet says: "Whoever says a prayer (*salat at-janaza*) over the bier of the dead earns a *kirat* but who is present at the ceremony till the body is interred merits two *kirats* of which one is as heavy as the Mount Chod."²⁶ "The lesser purification *wudu* (such as one performs before saying the prayers) is equivalent to a *mudd*, the complete purification, *ghusl*, is valued at a *Sa*."²⁷ The prayer in congregation has twenty-five times higher value than individual prayer." And so al-Muzani, a distinguished pupil of the Imam al-Shafi, one of the principal authorities of the second century, used to say twenty-five in-

²² Actes du xth Congress des Orientalistes. Second part, p. 67.

²³ Spiegel Traditionelle Literature der Parsenii, p. 87.

²⁴ Blochet in R. H. R. xl, 232, note 2.

²⁵ Al Darimi, Sunan p. 440. Al Shaibani, disciple of Abu Hanifa relates (Athiar ed. Lahore p. 93) that the reading of each word of the Qoran is equivalent to six good works. The formula *ALM* of which each letter has a separate value counts alone for thirty.

²⁶ Usd al ghaiba, 1, p. 172.

²⁷ *Ibid.* v. 586.

dividual prayers whenever he chanced not to join us in the common devotions.²⁸ When a pious soul emigrates from Mecca to Jerusalem, he is aware that he loses three quarters of the value of his prayers ; a prayer at Mecca being equal to 10,000 ordinary ones, while one said at Jerusalem was worth only 2,500 times more.²⁹ Similarly, one is liable to lose the quantity of merit acquired. "Whoever has a dog in his house, if it be not a shepherd dog, has his *bona opera* diminished each day by two kirat."³⁰ We find here without difficulty the Parsi calculation of good and evil acts by weight and measure. "Each step taken in going along with a dead body is a good deed of the value of 300 *stir* : each *stir* is worth 4 *dirhem* so that the 300 *stir* are equal in value to 1,200 *dirhem*."³¹ "To walk one step without the sacred girdle is an offence amounting to a *farman*, four steps to a *tanavar*."³² (A *tanavar* is equal to 1,200 *dirhem*.)

The figure 33 plays an important part in Parsi ritual as has been shown by Darmesteter.³³ Compare a parallel position in the Musalman tradition. I purposely refer but to the most ancient hadith. Thirty-three angels

28 Ibn Khallikan led. Wustenfeid No. 92.

29 Mujir al-din, al-Ins al jahl, p. 263.

30 Al Damiri Hayat al haywanii 101.

31 Sad-der, xii, 8.

32 *Ibid* lixxxii, 2.

33 Le Zendavesta. 1, p. 13, note 36.

carry the praise of man to heaven. Whenever sacred litanies are referred to we find the mention of 33 *tasbih*, 33 *tahmid*, 33 *takbir* and so on³⁴—a number which is still to be met with in the litanies of certain mystical Moslem communities.³⁵ The faith has 333 paths³⁶ and when the faithful makes his genuflection at prayers 333 bones and 333 nerves exalt the Deity.³⁷

I will now proceed to two instances, one of the greatest importance the other of perhaps the least significance, from the standpoint of religion, of Iranian influence on Islam.

The first is the Musalman institution of prayer, the homage which the slave of God renders in prostrating himself in dust before the *rabb-ul-alamin*, the Lord of all the worlds. The *number* of the daily devotional repetitions, which have their germs in Judo-Christian influence, certainly goes back to a Persian origin. Prayer as instituted by Muhammad himself was originally fixed for two parts in the day. Latterly a third was added (still in the Qoran), for a third portion of the day which Muhammad himself called the middle (*al-wusta*). Thus the morning

34 Muwatta, 1, p. 81 ; Al Bukhari Fada'il ul ashab No. 10.

35 Dupont et Coppolani, Les Confreries religieuses musulmanes (Aigiers 1897), p. 323.

36. Kut al kulub, 1, p. 83.

37 Al Darakutni apud al Balawi, Alif-Ba, 1, p. 371.

prayer, the evening prayer, and the middle one corresponded to the shakharith, minkhah and arbith of Judaism.

But when the religious institutions of the Parsis penetrated more and more into the circle of the founders of the Musalman rites this was no more sufficient. The Moslem would not remain behind time in comparison with the adepts of Parsism. The five *gahs* of the Persians, their five times of prayers, were borrowed as Darmesteter has already seen,³⁸ by the followers of the Prophet, and henceforth the Moslem prayers were not three but five in a day.³⁹

The second point is as I said insignificant from the standpoint of religion but is important as being a direct loan from Persia. It is the tooth-brush. One would hardly believe the amount of religious virtue attributed to this object by Musalman tradition. The pious pilgrims are recommended to bring back with them these sanctifying tooth-sticks from the holy places of the Islam.⁴⁰ The quantity of ancient passages denoting the great value attached by primitive Islam to the *miswak* offers a bewildering choice.

38 Chantes populaires des Afghans, p. 261.

39 See my remarks on 'Mahometisme' of M. Carra de Vaux (Z. D. M. G. liii p. 385).

40. For details regarding the wood for tooth-stick see al-Jahiz, Bayan, ii, 82.

The use of the miswak is like the canonical *adhan* a preliminary preparation to prayer, it belongs to the *sunan-almursalin*, that is, to the practices of the prophets who preceded even Muhammad.⁴¹ And the Prophet says :

“ One prayer after the use of the miswak is worth 76 ordinary prayers X.” “ If it would not prove too heavy an obligation on my believers I would have prescribed the miswak to precede every prayer.”⁴² And the old tradition placed the employment of the tooth-stick so high that it puts the following words into the mouth of the Prophet. “God has ordered me the *siwak* with such insistence that I am almost afraid that he has commanded it as a revealed law.”⁴³ In a humorous way it is said that the angel Gabriel so frequently enjoined the siwak upon the obedient Prophet that the latter feared the loss of his teeth by too frequent rubbing. One of the ten effects of the siwak is to excite the anger of Satan and this is agreeable to Allah (*mardat-lil-rabb, mushita lil shaytan*⁴⁴.)” One special virtue of the tooth-stick consists in this, that it faci-

41 Al Yakubi, *Annales* ed. Houtsma ii, 121.

42 Bucharî Tamanni, No. 9 ; Mu-nad Ahmed, lx, 116 ; Shai-bani, *Athar*, p. 20.

43 Musnad Ahmed, i, 339 (sa yunzal aleyya fihî) *ibid*, iii, 490 (sa yuktaba aleyya).

44 *Ibid* i, 3

litates for the dying in his last moments his profession of faith and shortens his agony.⁴⁵ In his last hour the Prophet had the miswak given to him and one of those present relates that he had never made so serious a use of it in his life as in these his last moments.⁴⁶ The poetic literature of the Musalmans has also taken possession of this sacred object. There is quite a branch of poetic literature devoted to the miswak. According to the testimony of the learned Shia Abdul Kasim Murtadha Alam al Huda the most beautiful poem on this subject is from the pen of the poet Anu Haj al-Numeyri (belonging to the transitional period between the Umayyads and the Abbassides⁴⁷).

Now, the high value attributed to the miswak is hardly explicable from the religious data of Islam. It takes us back to the Persian dominion and to the religious uses of the Parsis.⁴⁸ It received a liberal development in Musalman aphorisms some of which are known to us as the dicta of the prophet.⁴⁹

45 Al Mustatraf, I, p. 10; al Balawi, Alif ba, I, 137-8. According to a dictum reported by al-Shafi, the use of the miswak is also effective in strengthening the intellect; al Damiri II, 145 s.v. usfur.

46 Buch. Maghazi. No. 85.

47 Al gurar wal durar (lithgr. Teheran), p. 179.

48 Shayast la-shayast x, 20 xii, 13; Dadistani dini. xl, 8.

49 The "companion" Abdullah ibn Mas'ud was given the epithet of sahib al siwak, the reason for this title, which in any case was an honorific distinction, does not seem to have been recognised; and in place of al-siwak, we find variants like al-sawad and al-sirar which show that the true sense of the epithet was soon forgotten.

We have next to consider the reverse of the model. From time to time there were manifest symptoms of opposition of a reaction of Islam against Persian ideas. As a proof nothing is more typical than the change produced in the sentiments of the Musalmans regarding the dog, the most faithful of our domestic animals. It is a well known fact that from the beginnings of Islam, the dog has been looked upon as a despised animal. "The angels never enter a house where there is a dog or an idol." The Prophet had given orders, we are told, that all the dogs in Medina be put to death especially those of a certain unusual colour.⁵⁰ And the theologians of Islam are puzzled to account for the measure. It is related that the Khalif Abu Jafar al Mansur—this hadith is by Ibu Kataiba—being instructed on this point could be furnished with no further explanation by a celebrated scholar of his time, Amribn Ubaid, except, "This is what the hadith says; I do not know its reason." "Because," the Khalif explained, "the dog barks at publicans, and frightens the beggars."⁵¹ It is a matter of doubt whether the Prophet actually took such a measure. For in the Prophet's generation the canine race had not yet come to be hated. It is a

⁵⁰ Quite a collection of traditions on this subject is found in the *Alf-ba* of al-Balawi, 1, p. 378.

⁵¹ Ibn al Abbar, *Takmila* (Madrid ed. Bibl. arab. hisp.) p 533.

fact that at the time of the Prophet dogs were found about mosques and their presence in them in no way was regarded as a profanation of the sanctuaries.⁵² Even later we notice from the sentences preserved to us the amicable disposition of the Musalman towards this animal whose touch, however, from the standpoint of ceremonial law was a most serious pollution. The dog according to a hadith sees things which are invisible to us, *i. e.*, demons. If you find your dog barking at night ask for God's help against Satan.⁵³ This is altogether a Persian mode of thought, the dog shares this property in common with the cock⁵⁴ which also the Musalman tradition makes Muhammad regard as an enemy of Satan and which by its crow indicates its having beheld an angel.⁵⁵

In a sentence attributed to Hasan⁵⁶ al Basari (died 728 A.D.) which has passed with certain variants in modern Persian poetry⁵⁷ the practical Sufi or Fakir is comparable to the dog in a manner which at once reminds us of the well-known description of the dog—in

52 Musnad Ahmed ii, 71.

53 Apud al-Damiri ii, 331 and I, 198.

54 Bundahish xiv, 28 ; xix, 3 ; Sad-der xxxi, 8,

55 Al Damiri, p. 523 Cp. E. Stave *Über den Einfluss des Parsismus und das Judenthum* p. 131.

56 Al Makkari, Geyden ed. I, p. 393.

57 Chardin, *Voyages en Perse* ed. Langles IX, p. 205,

the *Avesta*. "The dog has ten qualities worthy of eulogy all of which ought to be found in a fakir."

How does it then come about that an animal supported in the times of Muhammad even in mosques and which subsequently was found worthy by its qualities to be compared to holy men all of a sudden inspires horror irreconcilable with the gentle conduct prescribed by Islam towards domestic animals? The reply is at once found when we consider the estimate which the animal enjoyed among the Parsis in whose midst the Musalmans established themselves. For them it is the animal that drives away evil spirits.⁵⁸ The dead body of the Parsi must have its glance before it is conveyed to the dakhma. In ancient times there were pious establishments for the maintenance of the animal to secure its assistance in crossing over the Cinvat bridge, an act the success or failure of which decided the eternal felicity or eternal damnation of the dead.

Musalman tradition desiring to oppose the religious esteem in which the animal was held by the Persians ascribed to the Prophet the steps for exterminating the dog and made

58 Vendidad, Frag xiii 44-48.

59 The Bulgarians on the banks of the Volga consider the barking of a dog good omen (*yatabarrakuna bi uwa al kalb*). Ibn Fadlan apud Yekut 1, 769, 13.

contemptible for religious motives a domestic animal cherished in former times.⁶⁰

Perhaps we can go up much further in the history of Islam to come across the effect of the Parsi elements on the formation of the ideas of Muhammad. This leads me to a hypothesis to which I would invite the attention of those who are interested in the historical research of the principles which have exercised an influence not only on the development but on the origin itself of the book of Muhammad.

Up to now Judaism and Christianity have been considered as the source of the information of the Qoran. Abraham Geiger's book in 1833 opened the path to investigations which since have been carried out in all manner of detail. The apocryphal literature of the Jews and Christians has also been studied with a view to its traces in the formation of the Qoran. The work of Rene Basset has furnished many useful indications which would stimulate the historian of primitive Islam to advance his studies beyond this sphere⁶¹. We

⁶⁰ I am not the first to pronounce this view, see, e. g., Jacob *Altarabisches Liedermenleben* 2nd ed. p. 84, which refers to Geiger *Ostiranische Cultur* p. 370, Ed. Hahn, *Die Haustihere und ihre Beziehung zur Wirthschaft des Menschen* p. 65, "the exaggerated esteem in which the Zend religion of the Parsis held it (i. e. the dog) has certainly contributed to the contempt of which it has become the object since the triumph of Islam; but it has not been possible, naturally, to dislodge it completely from the position which it had acquired".

⁶¹ *Les Apocryphes ethiopiens*, by Rene Basset, ix, p. 12 and 22.

find that the idea of the well guarded tablet, the *lauh-almahfuz*, on which is recorded the prototype of divine revelation as well as the destinies of humanity, has its source in a Hebrew work, and that the portrayal of the last judgment such as we find in the Qoran has its prototype in the book of Enoch.⁶² His relations with the Ethiopian Christians among whom the apocrypha enjoyed an important role are the cause of the penetration of these ideas into the horizon of the Arab Prophet.

Similarly it is not impossible that he had at his disposal Persian notions. It is not for the first time that the subject is mentioned and by us. It is generally recognised that the eschatological elements of the Qoran represents some loans taken directly from Persia over and above the Persian ideas which were spread abroad through Judaism and Christianity. The places at which and the occasions when Persian notions could enter Arabia were numerous in Muhammad's time.

Persian culture was at the door of the inhabitants of central Arabia at the period before the rise of Muhammad. The commerce of the merchants of Mecca which extended into Persian territory⁶³ as well as the voyages

⁶² The Book of Enoch 1, 6, 8.

⁶³ Aghani v 1, p. 93, 12 Abu Sufyan sent his caravans with merchandise of the Kureshites ila ard al Ajam as far as the land of the Persians. As regards the predatory incursions into the Persian territory see Ibn Hisham, p. 938, 2.

of itinerant poets brought them in contact with the civilization of Persia. Al-asha was not the only poet who tried to make excursions into the Sassanian empire. He was only one of many. And Hira frequented by the poets and the people of Arabia offers in spite of its Arab Court a veritable picture of Persian life. We meet with a large number of Persian words and expressions in the ancient Arabic language.

The old poets before Islam abound in allusions to Persian life and to Persian manners which they naturally avoided with a genuine Arab haughtiness but which at the same time afford reliable evidence of the knowledge which the Arabs had regarding the foreigners.⁶⁴ Aus ibn Hajar, a pre-Islamic poet, to stigmatise the family life of his enemy, brands it with the expression *jarisiyya*. From the beginning of the Christian era, Persians were exploiting gold mines in Arabia.⁶⁵ As for the influence which these Persians could exercise on the Arab population, we may judge of it by the fact that a portion of an Arab tribe settled in Bahrin, the Banu Ijl⁶⁶, became completely nationalised Persians. At the time of the rise of Muham-

64 Muhammed. Studien I, p. 102.

65 Cp. Glaser. Skizze der Gesichte und Geographie Arabiens ii, p. 193.

66 The passages quoted in Muham, Stud. I, p. 103 note 4.

mad, Yemen was specially under the Sasanide influence. We know by their names the Persian officials who exercised authority in the name of the Sasanides in south Arabia in the Prophet's epoch. We are justified in holding that the commerce between the north and south Arabia was not confined to the fine stuffs woven⁶⁷ in the south. It was not confined to the wine imported from Yemen and Hadramaut rich in⁶⁸ grapes and the celebrated vineyards of which are so frequently mentioned by the poets.

There was no want of opportunity for the religion of Persia to act upon the thought of the founder of Islam. In fact the Prophet knew the *majus* and places them on the same line with the Jews, Sabians and Christians, as opposed to those who practised idolatry (Surat xxi. 17). The *majus* were assuredly not so numerous around him to enable him to observe their religious system as well as that of the Jews and Christians about whom their ministers, Habr and Ruhban, supplied the Prophet with direct information. For him who was dominated by the idea of absolute monotheism, the idea of God restricted by the magian dualism could not prove a source of religious thought. Such sources there were in the

⁶⁷ Masudi, Tanbih ed. de. Geeje p. 281, 16.

⁶⁸ Muller-Mordtmann, Sudarabische Denkmale p. 87 ; Halvey Journal Asiat. 1872, 1. p. 524.

other religious systems by which he was surrounded and which he held to be degenerate forms of the original *din-Ibrahim* the creed of Abraham.⁶⁹

The persecutions which were later set on foot against unbelievers and heretics under the Abbasides with Persian influence may be traced to the words of the Qoran. The *kafir* of the Qoran is not a copy of the unbeliever and the heretic as they are presented in Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad has here introduced the idea of *material impurity*. This is the Parsi spirit: "A wicked biped, for example, an impious Ashemaogha defiles the creations of the God Spirit by direct contact, defiles them by indirect contact."⁷⁰ A conception of this kind must have hovered over the cradle of the Qoranic dictum *Innama-lmushrikina najisun*, verily the polytheists are *impure*. This maxim was originally taken literally only in theory and the old exegesis—Ibn Abbas is the authority—comments word for word on the sentence of the Qoran (Surat ix, 28), "the substance of the unbelievers is impure" and adds "one must perform ritual

69 The Persians also consider the true religion to have been from very remote antiquity. They call the religion *paoiryo tkao-sha* which was primitive and existed long before the advent of Zarathushtra who only reestablished it (Sacred Books xxiv p. 87). The same conception appears in Firdausi's *din-i-kuhen*.

70 Vendid fargard v, 37.

purification after having touched them.”^{70(a)} It must be stated in fairness, that the Sunni law has rejected from the text of the Qoran by a scholastic interpretation this hardly human idea and has explained in a moral sense “the impurity of the infidels (najas.)”⁷¹ But in the Shiite circles where Persian traditions had not ceased to exercise more pronounced influence the literal sense has been preserved in all its rigour and in every Shiite code we find *kafir* cited as one of the ten causes of ritualistic impurity (*deh najasat*).⁷²

We will not yield to the temptation of looking for the prototype of *zalim* in the Persian *sastaran*, oppressor, but I will proceed to give an example of what I have called latent Persian influence. The Friday of the Musalmans is an imitation of the Biblical sabbath. It is, however, distinguished on an essential point from the Biblical institution. The latter is intended to recall continually the divine work of creation, as completed in six days. It is a day of repose for man and no work must be done on that day because the work of creation of the world was achieved on that day.

70 (a) See the old exegetical views cited in the *Kasshaf* ad locum.

71 For ampler information cp. my *Zahiriten* p. 61-63.

72 *Droit Musalman* I, p. 17 art 267 et seq.

Muhammad likewise wanted to maintain among his faithful a belief in the work of the creation in six days ; but his Friday is not the day commemorative of it. It is neither the sabbath, the day of repose, nor a day of preparation for the sabbath. It is a day of assemblage for a weekly celebration of the cult. From the commencement it has never been considered a day of repose. " O believers," says Muhammad in the Qoran (lxii, 9-10) " when you are called to prayer on the day of meeting hasten to occupy yourself with God and give up sloth ; when the prayer is finished go where you like and look for the gifts of divine favour." The Prophet absolutely repudiates the idea that God rested from his work of creation. This notion is so deeply rooted in the Musalman conscience that he has always considered as a direct polemic against the Jews these words of the Qoran. " We have created heaven and earth and whatever is between them in six days and fatigue has not come over us, *wa ma massana min lughubin* (L. 37).

Now according to the Parsi doctrine the universe was created in six periods⁷³ and festivals were instituted in remembrance of each of the six periods of creation but not one of them

⁷³ Le Zend-avesta translated by J. Darmesteter 1, p. 37; 111, p. 57.

to celebrate the creation of the whole world ; so that there is no holy day resembling the sabbath of the Jews. The Parsi theologians combated the Jewish conception of sabbath and especially the idea that God took repose after the work of creation. The pazand document which is made known to us by Darmesteter⁷⁴ and in which the polemic of the Parsis against the institution of the sabbath has become the expression of a dogma dates in fact from the 9th century, but it is probable that it is but a reflex of older theological discussions.

This opposition to the biblical story of the creation does not seem to have escaped the knowledge of the Arabian Prophet. His spirit was strongly permeated with the idea of the omnipotence of God. This was the *idée mere* which filled his soul. Hence he enthusiastically seized the occasion in adopting the institution of the sabbath to differentiate it by energetic protest against the notion of a god who *takes repose*.

⁷⁴ *Revue des Etudes juives* xviii p. 9 No, 102.

NOTE (By The Translator) TO INFLUENCE OF PARSISM ON ISLAM.

When Muhammad began to preach his new religion a man of his own tribe called Nodar showed the most uncompromising hostility to him, says ibn Ishaq in his life of the Prophet, called *Sirat-ul-Rasul*. Nodar had lived a long time at Hira which was the centre of Sasanian influence in Arabia and he was acquainted with the legendary history of the Persians especially the extraordinary adventures of Rustam and Isphandiyar. In other words he seems to have known the *Khutai Namak* the Pahlavi source of the *Shahname*. When Muhammad assembled his audience and recited before them the Suras which the angel Gabriel had revealed to him, Nodar would mix with the crowd and cry "Now come along Koreshites, let me tell you a story which I believe and which is more beautiful than the one he has related to you just now." And he would recount romantic episodes from Persian History and then challenge Muhammad to "narrate any story as beautiful as mine." The result was that soon after the Prophet revealed the following :—

There is one that buyeth idle tales that he may seduce men from the way of God, with our knowledge, and make it a laughing stock.

These shall suffer a painful punishment. And when our signs are read to him, he turneth his back in disdain as though he heard them not, as though there were in his ears a deafness : give him joy of a grievous punishment (Surat, xxxL, 5-6).

Professor Goldziher's most elaborate studies in Arabic literature embodied in his *Muhammedanische Studien* have been drawn upon by every succeeding writer who has occasion to refer to the relations subsisting between the Persians and the pre-Muhammedan Arabs. It is, however, fair to say that the importance of the Iranian element was indicated even before him by a brilliant scholar, Von Kremer, whose work *Culturgeschichte des Orients* published in 1877 remains unsurpassed. Brokelmann in his standard *History of Arabic literature* takes every opportunity to record the parentage of the historian, poet, philologist or traditionalist, who being an Iranian, has contributed to Arab letters. Much biographical material of interest will be found in Wustenfeld's *Arab Historians and their work*. We may reserve for a future occasion a comprehensive treatment of the most absorbing subject of the Iranian influence on Arabian civilization, but meanwhile perhaps the following note of a very rapid and cursory survey may be read with interest.

Of the poets who employed the Arabic language of their conquerors, some Iranians made an open profession of their faith in Zoroastrianism in their works. Such was Ismail ibn Yasar. There were some poets, and later we will come across historians, grammarians, translators from Pahlavi into Arabic, who still retained their characteristic Iranian names though they had already embraced Islam. Such was Sapur (in Arabic Sabur), ar-Rawiya, one of the very few authors who betrayed their non-Arab origin by defective Arabic. Basshar ibn Burd's poems avow an undisguised tendency to Mazdayasnianism. It is difficult to dismiss him with a couple of lines. He was proud of his descent from the "Kuresh of Persia." He was the leader of the Shuubia who championed the cause of the past glories of Iran and ridiculed the parvenu pretensions of the pre-Muhammadan Arab against whom he composed mordant satires. Abu Nuwas one of the most celebrated of Arabian poets had Persian blood in his veins and so had a minor poet Abbas al-Akhnaf. Ibrahim al-Mauzili is known to fame more as a musician than poet. Abul Hasan Mahyar ibn Marzuye was still a Zoroastrian in his younger days. Abu Ismail al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-Ispahani, the author of *Lamiyat-al-Ajam*, was of Iranian origin. So late as in the

twelfth century we meet with names like Rustam ad-Dimashki, Behramshah ibn Farrukhshah who was murdered in 1230 and Nuruddin Rustam who died in 1254.

The first and the most important philologist was the Iranian whose name in Arabic we read as Sibawaihi. The father of Sirafi was Behzad who was still a Zoroastrian, while the son adopted Islam and died in 978 A. D. Bahman ibn Firuz as his name indicates was Iranian by birth but soon adopted the faith of his masters and is famous as al-Kisai. He is one of seven canonical Readers of the Qoran. Harun ar-Rashid appointed him tutor to his sons Amin and Mamun. His pupil Zakariya was like his master Zoroastrian by birth. Ibn Kutaiba one of the so-called Arabian authors who was a profound Bible scholar was of Iranian extraction. So was Dinawari better known to fame as a historian who in all probability drew his material directly from Pahlavi originals. Al-Marzuban needs no further comment. Al-Mikali was proud to be able to trace his pedigree to Bahram-Gor. As a man of letters and poet he played an important role in Khorasan and died in 1044. Zamakhshari first employed Persian in his writings but was latterly persuaded of the scientific superiority of Arabic over his mother tongue, Tahir ibn Ahmad ibn Babashad as his grandfather's name indicates was of Persian descent.

We need not labour the point that the rich Pahlavi literature was early translated into Arabic supplying models to the justly famous historians who used the Arabic language. "More accurate investigation" says Brokelmann "will perhaps exhibit the dependence of the Arabs on Iran even in matter of style." Al-Beladhori was an Iranian by birth and lived at the Court of Mutawakkil and of Mustain. Nothing is left to us of his translations from Pahlavi including the *Reign of Ardeshir*. Al-Suli was a direct convert from Mazdaism to Islam. The Khalifs al-Muktafi, and al-Muktadir esteemed him for his skill in chess. Hamza of Ispahan was a born Iranian and was an overt and proud partisan of Iranianism. His history is reared on oral communication from Zoroastrian priests and direct Persian sources. His merit consisted in restoring the geographical names of Persia which Arabs had mutilated. It was reserved for an Iranian to write the first complete history of the world in Arabic. This was Tabari.

In the province of sacred tradition of hadith no name stands higher than Ismail Bukhari's. He belonged to an Iranian family of Bukhara. His grandfather was named Bardezbah. In dogmatic theology or jurisprudence, fiqh, one of the leaders Abu Hanifa was the grandson of a Persian slave. The

Shia literature of this branch is preponderatingly Iranian. His name is a guarantee that Khordadbeh, the great geographer, was an Iranian. His grandfather was a proselyte to Islam. Among physicians al-Majusi, who attended on Sultan Adudaddaula, was the son of a Mazdayasnian. It would be unfair to allege that the only remaining literary celebrities are Bahram Maghribi the traditionalist, the historian al-Biruni and numerous Nisapuris, Ispahanis, Dihistanis, Khwarizmis, who if not pure Persians had a considerable admixture of Iranian blood in them. The English reader would find ample justification for our claim that Arabic literature *minus* authors of Iranian birth or extraction would scarcely be the famous literature contemporaneous with the dark ages of Europe and of which Moslems are rightly proud in the more recent works of English writers like the admirable *Literary History of Persia* by Prof. Browne and the *Literary History of the Arabs* of Prof. Nicholson. Much useful material lucidly set forth is collected by Prof. Clement Huart in his *Arabic Literature* (see the opening portion of Ch. V).

WHO DESTROYED THE FIRE TEMPLES OF IRAN ?

It is commonly held by the Parsi community and by the less informed non-Parsis that the destruction of all the Fire Temples in Persia was brought about by the conquering Arabs who ruined the country after the battle of Qadisiya (635 A. D.) followed by the irremediable crash at Nehavend (642 A. D.) It is believed that remorseless religious persecution was the order of the day and that the ruin, material and spiritual of Aryan Iran, is exclusively attributable to the fanaticism of the Semitic invaders from Arabia. Little account is taken of the condition of decay resulting from disunion which would have seen the mighty fabric of the Sasanians collapse of its own accord had not a coincidence brought the Arabs on the scene.

The first serious doubts about the fire temples seem to have been expressed by Dr. Wiel, who in his *History of the Khalifas* (Vol. II 237), is surprised at the flourishing condition of the Parsis in Iran long after the subversion of the Sasanian Empire. Next, Spiegel (*Z. D. M. G.* IV, 1850, 71), was equally astonished to find in the 9th Christian century corresponding to the third century of the Hijira, Zoroastrianism prosperous in Iran

and with a considerable number of adherents. A more systematic investigation of the question was made by the Russian scholar Chwolsohn in his exceedingly important work on the Sabians and their religion (St. Petersburg, 1856 Vol. I, Chapter 9). The Arab authorities cited from manuscript by Chwolsohn have since been edited and are there now accessible to the unbiassed enquirer. "The throne of the Sasanians," says Chwolsohn, "was destroyed early in the time of the first Khalifas. But Zoroastrianism had for centuries its fire altars almost in the entire extent of its former dominions where it still occupies a corner of refuge."

When in 912 A. D. the Alide prince Hasan Bin Ali exhorted the inhabitants of Tabaristan and Daylam, who were idol worshippers and partly Magians to embrace Islam, though many hearkened to his call, an equally large number both in Daylam and Jibal obstinately adhered to their earlier faith. The Arab geographers describe in detail the country of Iran, and as a rule, they take particular pains to mention the vestiges of the past. They study the ancient monuments as well as the contemporary condition of the people. Their records furnish us with irrefutable evidence that Parsis lived in Iran long after the Moslem conquest almost undisturbed in the exercise of their religious

rites with considerable political power and that their holy shrines covered the land.

Fire temples existed in Persia from times immemorial. Some date from an age anterior to Zoroaster. They continue to flourish down to our own times. Many of the geographers who note them in their itineraries in Arabic were Persian or of Iranian extraction. Some like Kazwini describe the country in Persian. Both those who employed the Arabic language and those who wrote in the Persian mother tongue took stock of the celebrated antique vestiges and neglected monuments of Zoroastrians. It is a common place now that Masudi, whose works have been translated into French, refers to Fire temples both in ruins and in use in numerous pages of his *Muruj-uz-Zahab* (tr. Barbier de Meynard). He devotes a chapter (LXVIII) to an "account of the Fire temples etc." He instances some of the most renowned Fire temples as quondam shrines of image worship. Such was the most widely venerated Fire Temple at Persepolis (Vol. IV p. 76). Masudi records Fire temples in the provinces of Iraq, Fars, Kerman, Sijistan, Khorasan, Tabaristan, Azerbaijan, in Sindh, India proper and even China. When Shapur laid siege to Constantinople he compelled the Greeks in virtue of a treaty not only to erect a temple but to provide for its future maintenance.

In Masudi's less known but much more important *Kitab-at-Tanbih* we meet with the famous Atash-kadeh of Shiz, so elaborately described by Yakut and mentioned, by Ibn Khordadbeh (p. 12) and Ibn. Fakih (p. 276). It was built by Hormaz and destroyed, according to Carra de Vaux, by Heraclius (*Le Livre de l'avertissement* p. 138).

Now for a few passages from Arabic authorities on our holy fires which await full translation. With conscientious care they have been noted by the famous Moslem travellers and historians, to many of whom the shrines were proud survivals of a glorious past. And they make no secret of the fact, whenever they observe it, that some of the mosques at one time were fire temples.

In describing Istakhr or Persepolis, Mukaddasi says that the principal mosque was situated in the bazar. It was built after the fashion of the Syrian mosque with round pillars. It was alleged that in former times it was a fire temple (pp. 20, 41, 20, 16.) Describing the province of Shapur, he notes the celebrated fire temples, two of which were at the gate of the city of Shapur. One of them was called Gumbaz Gawser, near the Sasan Gate. Among the most celebrated fire temples there were two in Kazerun, one of

which was called Gul Azar. One in another locality was named after Darius son of Darius :—"the Magians swear their most solemn oaths by this fire temple." Further, "in the district of Shapur there is a mountain. Here are delineated the portraits of Kings, Marzbans, fire priests and distinguished Magians and other persons who are celebrated among the Persians. There are also there records of the deeds they achieved and their dates. There are special men appointed as superintendents. They live in the fortress of Jiss in the province of Arrajan." (see my *Iranian influence on Moslem Literature* p. 19.)

Istakhri again is our authority for the fire temple outside the city gate of Shiraz in a village. Ibn Hauqal ascertains the exact position and observes that this temple could be seen from Shiraz situate in a village a mile to the North. "King Ardeshir had taken a vow that he would build a city and erect a fire temple at a place where he should overcome his adversary, and he built a fire temple at Jur which is built after the model of Darab-gard." Another fire temple was built by him on a mountain facing a stream and he contrived to get the water to the top of the hill. The same is described by Ibn Wadih. One more fire temple is catalogued, this time with a most attractive

adjunct,—a Phalvi inscription which records that its structure cost thirty thousand *dirhams*. Tabari speaking of Mehr Narse, the vizir of the Sasanian King Behram V, states that he constructed a magnificent building with a fire temple in which the holy flame was uninterruptedly kept up to his own day. It was called Meher Narsiya. The prime minister seems to have settled four villages, in each of which he built a fire temple. One of these was his own and he called it *Farazmara avar khudayan* (which may mean: bring me near to Thee, My Lord). He maintained three more sanctuaries associated with the names of each of his three sons. He laid out three gardens in the sacred neighbourhood planted with olive, palm and cyprus trees. "These orchards and fire temples, the property of the celebrated descendants of the founder, are reported to be to this day in the finest condition." (Tabari 2, 2, 1008 seq.). "In the province of Ardeshir Khurra there is a fire temple which is highly revered by the Zoroastrians. When the Arabs came into power the Zoroastrians were afraid that a certain renowned fire might be extinguished. Therefore they divided it into two parts, one portion remaining at Kariyan and the other was conveyed at Fasa in the hope that if one was put out the other would remain. (Ibn Fakih 246, 7.)

Istakhri categorically states: "there is hardly a district in which there is no fire temple (100, 2). Mukaddasi mentions a *Kanizat-al-Majus* or Zoroastrian shrine in Arrajan (p. 39). In the district of Farahan there is a village with an ancient fire temple. "A fire which is perpetuated there belongs to those who are held in high esteem by the mass of Zoroastrians," Its name was Adhar Jushnasf (Ibn Fakih p. 246, 13). When Mazdak was killed the sacred fires were brought back to their places. One of them continued to be there in its full splendour till the year 282 of the Hijira, which is to say, 895 A. D. as computed by Schwarz. Subsequently the Turks under their Governor of Kum invaded the place, razed the temple to the ground, extinguished the fire, but carried the fire receptacle to Kum (Ibn Fakih p. 246). As Schwarz points out this Turk, called Burun, died in 902 A. D.

Hamadani notices (p. 246) an ancient fire temple of the Magians similar to that of Adhar Khurreh; also the fire of Jamshid, the fire of Mah Gushnasf, the fire of Kaikhushro. Referring to Shiz he speaks of its fire temple as enjoying great sanctity among the Magians, (p. 286.)

The cause of the ruin of many a pyreum and holy sanctuary, in brief, would appear to be as much Islamic fury as Zoroastrian apathy. And to realize this unpleasant truth of our own indifference we have to dispassionately examine the history of our scriptures, not wholly committed to memory, transcribed with slovenlyness, with wonton additions and omissions, and at times impious mutilation and more sacrilegious interpolations. We need not resort to the pages of the bigoted Moslem or lukewarm continental travellers or American "Asia-trotters." There are English historians available to every school boy, like the great Gibbon (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. III, p. 591). The early proselyte to Islam had all the cruel zeal of a new convert. Some of the new converts, permitted to continue in their former position of power and pelf, seem to have declined, in the teeth of juristic authorities, to regard their brethren who had remained faithful to Zoroastrianism the possession of a divine Book. And the increasingly ignorant Zoroastrians instead of referring the ruling authorities to Islamic legislators, took to the devious course of identifying Zoroaster with Abraham and dexterously connecting their scriptures with the chain of divine revelation. The prudence of the Khalifas ranked the Magians or Gabrs with

the Jews and the Christians among the people of written law. Gibbon unhesitatingly declares that the greatest part of the temples of Persia were ruined by the insensible and general desertion of their votaries. "It was *insensible* since it is not accompanied by any memorial of time or place, of persecution or resistance. It was *general* since the whole realm from Shiraz to Samarkand imbibed the faith of the Qoran; and the preservation of the native tongue reveals the descent of the Mahomedans of Persia."



RIVAYATS.

I

The Rivayat period covers many centuries and gives us most important information regarding the condition of the Parsis of Persia. In this period were copied or redacted Pahlavi writings. Some were written anew. Others were added to, interpolated, truncated. They contain, nevertheless, something of the old. If all these Pahlavi texts are published and translated, the life of the Parsis in Persia, after the exodus of a few hundred to India, will be illuminated, because for several centuries the Sasanian influence most potently affected the Arab administration. It was never extinguished. It lay dormant for a period. It is today being revived vigorously. The Zoroast-

rian months are restored to Persia's calendar by an Act of Parliament. The Iranophile extremists propose even to do away with the convenient Arabic script and replace it by the cumbrous Avesta alphabet.

From the philological point of view the Persian Rivayats are valuable, containing as they do old Pahlavi words which have been supplanted by modern Perso-Arabic equivalents in ordinary literature. For instance, the now obsolete word *vaderan* occurs in the Rivayats in the sense of "the deceased." As I have pointed out elsewhere, a Rivayat refers to questions of the faithful of Samarkand. The Rivayats embody indications of the social life of the Parsis such as the five classes of wives (*punch-guneh-zen*). Moreover there is ample material regarding marriage (*nikah kardan mahr* or *kabin*), inheritance, and divorce which is described as *talak* or *riha kardan zanra*. Next after Spiegel, West gives a detailed account of the contents of the Rivayats, and exhaustive researches in them have been made by Bartholomae. For our purposes we can refer to the Rivayats of Bahman Punjiya, Kama Bohra, Kama bin Asa, Kamdin Shahpur, Kawus Kamdin, Kawus Kama, Manek Changa, Nariman Hoshang, Shahpur of Broach. We learn about the law of

inheritance from the Rivayat of Kama Asa. From the collection of Dastur Borzu's Rivayats we learn why the *nasks* or Avesta texts have not been preserved in their entirety; the reason being that Alexander the Great set fire to remainder of the Avesta literature after he had carried to his country and got translated the portions relating to astronomy and medicine. That there was considerable medicinal lore among the Iranian people is attested by the Avesta texts and more particularly from the Bundahish and Dinkard which latter devotes some chapters to the subject. (Fichtner, *Medizin im Avesta* p. 6.) In the Rivayats we find to what extent the Dasturs prosecuted the study of Sanskrit. We see among them, as did Haug in the year 1864 at Surat, a "fragment of Zend Sanskrit vocabulary belonging to the library of Dasturji Kursetji." To what extent the priestly restrictions have acquired the force of irresistible custom in the minutest functions of life we note from the various rituals and ceremonies connected with trivialities,—prayers over the slaughtering of a sheep or fowl and the formula to be recited when putting on a new suit of clothes. In the course of our examination of these manuscripts we come again and again upon places where the scribes give free scope to their libertine ways. Passages are added or omitted at will; when

unable to decipher a word, at times and not invariably, the copyist was good enough to leave a blank.

Guided by Bartholomae we may make a rapid survey of this mediæval old curiosity shop of Zoroastrian tenets, peaceful discussions with "wise Moslems," usages, usuary laws, rites, treatment of non-Zoroastrians, education, legalised assassination, vicarious acquirement of religious merits, religious conversions, superstitions and sciences, morals which were not above countenancing deviation from truth and pious impositions for the sake of religion dearer possibly than life, but not higher than conscience.

Here is a synopsis of the rich material on which a volume may be written :

Questions by the faithful of Samarkand *re.* the institution of the Dakhma and reply to them by Adar Farrokhzad (p* 41); on the five kinds of wives; on dowry and gift by the bridegroom to the bride (p* 42), Mahr (or kabyn), inheritance, divorce and other enactments on marriage, the names of the Rivayat authors, (p* 42); manuscripts prepar'd in Samvat 1713 in Surat by Darab Hira in the reign of "Padshah Shri Shah Jahan" (p 8); the recital over the slaughter of a fowl, (p 10); examples of blank left by transcribers

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RIVAYATS.

II

Since the advent of the Parsis from Persia for several centuries the intercourse with the old country ceased to all appearance entirely. The earliest resumption of communication dates from the 25th June 1478 when letters were brought to Broach from Sherfabad and Turqabad, villages in the vicinity of Yezd, by Nariman Hoshang who was deputed there by the Zoroastrians of Gujarat. It is probable that earlier missions to Iran were sent from India. But the records relating to them have perished beyond recall. For we learn from the oldest colophon to a manuscript that Mahyar son of Mah Milhr, a Mobed from Uteh on the Indus, after a sojourn of six years in Sistan was about to return home in 1205 with a copy of the Pahlavi Vandidad and religious information which he had gathered. These communications from Persia, generally in reply to questions from India, are called Rivayats. They are, as we saw, a mine of information on the religious and social customs of the Parsis of the later mediaeval period. Although West has most lucidly exposted the Rivayat literature he had not a less competent predecessor in Spiegel. Anyone with the minimum requisite acquaintance with the Islamic literature necessary

for a comprehensive understanding of Parsi history and traditions is aware that *Rivayat* is an Arabic term, connoting both an ordinary narrative and also an authoritative tradition. *Rawi* is the narrator of such a tradition. Among the Parsis it has come to signify the opinions of any Dastur in the middle ages with regard to religious questions. These opinions are incorporated in the collections called Rivayats. It will appear that our Rivayats are more or less the Zoroastrian counter parts of the Islamic Fatwa literature.

On many questions conflicting opinions are given by the Parsi divines. On some there is unanimity. At times we find the views expressed show indentity of meaning but diversity of language. The tradition usually bases itself upon the texts of the scriptures which it annotates and expounds. In some cases the traditions are of a casuistic nature, which introduce us to the misgivings the Parsis had on certain practical exigencies of life in the light of their holy writ. Some of the Rivayats treat of the mythological portion of the Avesta and contain elaborations not to be found in the latter. As there is a variety in the content, so also there is no uniformity in the presentment of tradition. Most of these Rivayats are in Persian prose. But some are also in verse of a very poor poetic value. Certain portions

of the Avesta, the Vandidad for instance, contains prescriptions for the every day life of the believers which are impossible to be carried out in the twentieth century. In the days of the Rivayats, too, they were found impracticable. Hence a series of questions on cases of conscience addressed by the perplexed laity to Zoroastrian theologians. The third chapter of the Vandidad directs that the earth shall be polluted by no filth, and as the Zoroastrians were mostly agriculturists, both in Persia and in India, serious qualms of conscience perturbed the faithful who wanted to use manure. Accordingly we find the Rivayats dealing with such economic problems in the light of religious precriptions. I shall give illustrations:

The question is with regard to a piece of land and how a man should bring manure on it. A man owns a field and has wife and children. When he uses manure the yield of the crops provides maintenance for his wife and children. When he uses no manure, the crops are only a half, and his family cannot be supported. What does the Law say?

The answer is this:—The manure from domestic animals of all kinds is allowable. That produced from believing men must be spread over on an even piece of ground over which the sun sheds its rays and over which it has

rained four times. As soon as it is dry, it is permissible for use in the field. The excreta of the infidels are prohibited, because they contain all manner of impurities, and every time any impurity comes in contact with water, the result is as if there was no water. The manure from unbelievers is never free from impurities.

The theologian goes on to develop the view that whenever the sin of an act outweighs the merit of it, it should be avoided. Nor is it permissible to perform a deed in which the sin and the merit balance each other in view of the Day of Resurrection.

The above is taken from the Rivayat of Kama Bohra. The answering portion in the Rivayat of Kawus Kama shows considerable divergence. "The question is this:—there is a man who has sons and daughters and owns a piece of land. When he manures his ground, the yield suffices to maintain him as well as his children. But when the land is not manured, his income is reduced to a half and he cannot live. He, however, collects manure from over all, since he is unable to procure it on the spot where he resides. What is the legal decision in such a case?

Answer:—The manure of quadrupeds which have not eaten of dead bodies within a year may be utilised for the field. The excreta of

the believers may be spread over an even ground and allowed to be there for four months, exposed to the influences of the sun and the moon. And it must have rain fallen on it, so that the whole becomes wet. If it does not rain during four months, the owner of the field must have patience till the land has had four showers of rain. Then it is licit to take the manure into his field. But it is not permissible to use manure from the houses of infidels.' The term used for infidels is *Anir*, which is to say, un-Aryan, the only true Aryan being Zoroastrian.

In another place the same question is discussed thus:—

“A man asks:—When I do not use manure I cannot live. Nor can I maintain myself by the sale proceeds of the land. My children suffer from want. I am obliged to eat from the hands of unbelievers, the land has to be sown by unbelievers and it goes to the unbelievers. But when I personally look after my piece of land I can likewise look after my children. Thus if in using the manure I commit a sin there is also the merit of maintaining my children. What does the Law say regarding it?

Answer:—The manure from infidels is totally impure because the infidels abstain from

nothing and the impure things are found in their evacuations. Whoever mixes them with water defiles the latter to the same extent as if water was thrown on fire. For every filth which comes in touch with water and fire is like unto dead matter and every person who brings it in contact with the elements is guilty of a sin for which the penalty is death. Now you have put forward your case, while I have given my decision in accordance with the fact of the virtue which resides in water and fire. You must act in such a manner as to incur the least sin. A man may always use the excreta of believers." And the doctor proceeds to describe the cases in which mortal sin is incurred.

According to the Avesta or rather the Vandidad, flies and insects are the creatures of Ahriman. Hence certain scruples among the Zoroastrians of the age, Can a Zoroastrian eat honey which is produced by a bee, a kind of fly, and can he put on a silk garment, the produce of a worm? Here also the Rivayats authorities exercise their casuistic ingenuity. The Rivayat of Kawus Kamdin answers that if these noxious creatures have been created by the Evil Spirit, God has turned the evil to advantage, providing sweet honey and material for fine clothing to mankind which are allowable. A Herbad may after washing his hands take out the honey from the comb and the layman

may similarly take it out for his fellows, employing the substance for medical purposes.

The Rivayats incorporate ceremonial law and the contents correspond both with the Old Testament portions of the Halaka or the rule and the Haggada or the more imaginative and originally oral tradition. They contain not unimportant mythological information and supplement Firdausi. The language, however, leaves much to be desired. At the same time it must be observed that what appears grammatical solecisms are probably dialectical variants and as such require to be carefully studied before we attempt to amend the traditional text. There is a noteworthy continuation of the legend of Tahmuras and Jamshid, also Kereshaspa, which need to be studied as parallels or complements to the Shah-nameh. Another ingredient of the Rivayats is exegesis of the Avesta, commentaries on the most important of the prayers like Ahuna Vairya and Ashem Vohu.

The Rivayat literature argues a good deal of traditional familiarity and appreciation of the original texts. In certain cases the Avesta text is elucidated word for word in Persian. At the same time much is imported into the interpretation which to us seems foreign to the original. A queer element of the Rivayats

are charms and spells which remind us at once of the hymns of the Atharva Veda.

Spiegel finds the most important portion of the Rivayats in the sections dealing with the doctrine of resurrection. The mutual study of Zoroastrians and Musalmans of the religions of each other is testified by the employment of a common theological terminology. Thus in the Rivayats the term Hadis is employed in the same significance in which it is used by the Musalmans. (Die traditionelle Litteratur der Parsen p. 172.)

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