TEXT FLY WITHIN THE BOOK ONLY

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_150181

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OUP 902—26-4-70 - 5,000

**OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

Call No. Accession No.

Author

Title

This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below

# ZOROASTRIAN CIVILIZATION

# ZOROASTRIAN CIVILIZATION

From the Earliest Times
to the Downfall
of the Last Zoroastrian Empire
651 A.D.

BY
MANECKJI NUSSERVANJI DHALLA

NEW YORK
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMERICAN BRANCH 35 WEST 32ND STREET
LONDON, TORONTO, MELBOURNE, AND BOMBAY
1922

*Copyright, 1922,*
BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMERICAN BRANCH

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

SIR DORABJI JAMSHEDJI TATA

HEAD OF THE

HOUSE OF THE TATAS

PIONEERS OF INDUSTRIAL REGENERATION

IN INDIA

CHAPTER PAGE

—Physical imperfections—Social imperfections—Cheerful optimism characterizes Zoroastrianism.

VII. AVESTAN LITERATURE . . . . . 38

Name of the language and literature of Ancient Iran—The place of the Avestan language in the Indo-European group of languages—Avestan Alphabet—The extent of Avestan literature—Avestan manuscripts—The nature of Avestan literature—Avestan poetry—Specimens of Avestan literature—Similes, metaphors, and other notable characteristics—Maxims.

VIII. KIANIAN SOCIETY . . . . . 62

Society divided on racial basis—Society divided on religious basis—Society divided on professional basis—Social polity.

IX. THE FAMILY . . . . . 66

The Zoroastrian type of the family—The family centres in the hearth—The family thrives under divine protection—Parents—Children—Adoption—The family group—Servants and slaves.

X. WOMAN AND MARRIAGE . . . . . 74

Woman in Kianian Iran—Ideal of Iranian womanhood—The Iranian view of marriage—Form of marriage—Aversion to marrying outside the Mazdian pale—The proper age for marriage—Marriages arranged by parents or contracted by the mutual consent of the couple—The wedded life—Children born in wedlock—The wedding hymn.

XI. EDUCATION . . . . . 82

The religious basis of education—Value of education—The teacher and his pupils—The qualifications of a teacher—The method of teaching—The subjects of teaching—The time of study—Education of women—Schools.

XII. KINGSHIP . . . . . 86

The titles of a sovereign—The office of the king is hereditary—Coronation—The status of the king—The king and the people—The king in relation to the chiefs of the country—The royal court—The court formalities—Envoys and ambassadors—Royal gifts.

XIII. LAW AND JUSTICE . . . . . 95

Origin of law—Nature of law—Administrators of justice—Qualifications of a judge—Places of justice—Legal procedure—The interpreters of law—Law of evidence—Law of property—Sequestration and confiscation—Loan and interest—Oath—Applications of oath—The binding nature of an oath—Self-imprecatory oaths—Oaths taken upon divine beings, persons, and objects—Ceremonial rites to strengthen the validity of an oath—Ordeals—Ordeal code—Use of ordeals—Classification

CHAPTER PAGE

of ordeals—Ordeal by fire—Ordeal by molten metal—Miscellaneous tests—Religious basis of the ordeal—Regulations about the conduct of ordeals—Crimes and punishment—Classification of crimes—The nature of punishment—Crimes against morality—Adultery and prostitution—Abortion—Unnatural crime—Crimes against property—Inviolability of contracts—Forms of contract—Punishment for the breach of contract—Theft and robbery—Assaults—Every repetition of a crime is met with a heavier punishment—Crimes against public health—Defilement and uncleanliness—Crimes against animals—Penalty for cruelty to animals.

XIV. PRIEST AND PRIESTHOOD . . . . . 122

The status of the priests in Iranian society—Hereditary succession becomes the rule of priesthood—Graded ranks of the priests—Their qualifications—Their functions—Means of their livelihood—Implements and utensils in use of the priests.

XV. WARRIORS AND WARFARE . . . . . 127

Greatness of the profession of the warriors—The nation as the empire's army—Divine aid invoked in war—Astrologers consulted to predict the result of the war—Causes that led to war—Weapons of war—Defensive arms—Chariots—Flags and banners—The playing of various instruments, an accompaniment of all warlike movements—Food and equipment—The army—Military discipline—Payments and gifts to the army—Scouts and watchmen—Single combats generally preceded mass attack—Treatment allotted to the vanquished enemy.

XVI. AGRICULTURISTS AND AGRICULTURE . . . . . 140

Excellence of husbandry—Farming agencies—Cleansing the land before tilling—Agriculturists invoke divine help—The kind of crops grown by the farmers—Agricultural implements—Agriculture depended upon irrigation—Cattle-farming.

XVII. ARTISANS AND ART . . . . . 146

Manufacturers—Royal art.

XVIII. ARCHITECTURE . . . . . 148

Structural art—Temple buildings—Mortuary structures—Fortifications.

XIX. PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS . . . . . 151

Causes of diseases—Diseases believed to have been caused by supernatural phenomena cured by the recital of spells and incantations—Physical ailments cured by drugs or by surgical operations—The qualifications of a doctor—Professional discipline—The scale of fees to be paid to physicians—Veterinary surgeons.

CHAPTER PAGE

XX. SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH . . . . . 155

Extreme regard for cleanliness—The defilement caused by the dead—The disposal of the dead—The cleansing of the earth defiled by the dead—The manner of giving purification to the waters polluted by the dead matter—Treatment of clothes that have come in contact with the dead—The process of cleansing defiled utensils—Impurity and wood for the fire—The method of cleansing various objects defiled by the dead—Precautionary measures to be taken by one who is defiled by the dead in the wilderness—Sanitary injunctions for the corpse-bearers—Ceremonial ablutions for a man defiled by the dead—Segregation of a person defiled by the dead—The reward of the cleanser.

XXI. COMMERCE . . . . . 166

Commercial activities—Weights—The standard of measurements—Measures of distance—Lineal measures—The system of numeration—Quantitative values.

XXII. CALENDAR . . . . . 171

Seasonal divisions—The year—The month—The day—The Kianians had no fixed era.

XXIII. DRESS AND ORNAMENTS . . . . . 174

Sacred garments—Ordinary garments—Significance of garments of different colours—Ornaments.

XXIV. DOMESTIC ANIMALS . . . . . 177

Classes of animals—Cattle—The rearing of cattle—The dog—The importance of the dog—The different kinds of dogs—The dog as the sacred animal—His work—Qualities of dogs—Feeding the dogs—The care of the dogs—The breeding of the dogs—Penalty for the ill-treatment of dogs—The horse—His work among the celestial beings—His services upon earth—The camel—The chief pack animal of Iran—The elephant—The royal animal—The cock—The herald of dawn—Noxious creatures—Merit of extirpating noxious creatures that injure the living.

XXV. FOOD AND DRINK . . . . . 187

Eating and fasting—The daily fare of the people—The manner of eating—The use of wine in Ancient Iran.

XXVI. FEASTS AND FESTIVALS . . . . . 190

Festive occasions—The seasonal festivals—The festival of Mithra—The feasts of the dead—Feast of the fire—The festival of waters.

XXVII. AMUSEMENTS . . . . . 194

The religious justification of amusements—Hunting was the chief royal pastime—Music and dancing—Games and sports.

CHAPTER PAGE

XXVIII. DIVINATION AND SORCERY . . . . . 196

The art of divination enjoyed a great vogue in Iran—Sorcery is vigorously denounced.

THE MEDIAN PERIOD

From 708 B. C. to 558 B. C.

XXIX. THE MEDES . . . . . 201

The early Aryans of Western Iran—Their racial characteristics—The Median king and his court—Warfare—Dress and ornaments—Food and drink—Luxury—Art and architecture.

THE ACHAEMENIAN PERIOD

From 558 B. C. to 330 B. C.

XXX. THE ACHAEMENIANS . . . . . 209

The Persians of Pars—Diverse civilizations met in Achaemenian Persia—Their physique—Their racial characteristics.

XXXI. LITERATURE . . . . . 214

The Achaemenians were not engrossed with intellectual pursuits.

XXXII. SOCIETY . . . . . 218

Social divisions—The family—The position of women—Marriage—Social customs—Slaves and eunuchs.

XXXIII. EDUCATION . . . . . 224

Aim of education—Period of education—The place of instructions—Moral and intellectual education—Physical training.

XXXIV. KINGSHIP . . . . . 227

The king—The power of the king—The king in public life—The royal court—The king in private life—The royal household.

XXXV. ADMINISTRATION . . . . . 234

The satrapies—Coinage—Posts and couriers—Law and Justice.

XXXVI. WARFARE . . . . . 241

The warriors profession—Divine aid was always invoked before setting out on an expedition—Gathering the sinews of war—The army—On to the field—Arms and armour—The war chariots—The camp—The fleet—The naval fight—The treatment of the vanquished.

CHAPTER PAGE

XXXVII. ART AND ARCHITECTURE . . . . . 252

Architectural remains—The royal architecture—The palaces—The royal tombs—Cuneiform inscriptions—The glyptic art.

XXXVIII. DRESS AND ORNAMENTS . . . . . 258

Dress—Ornaments.

XXXIX. FOOD AND DRINK . . . . . 260

Food—Drink.

XL. AMUSEMENTS . . . . . 262

Diversions and sports—The chase.

THE PERIOD OF STAGNATION

From 330 B. C. to 225 A. D.

XLI. ZOROASTRIAN CIVILIZATION ARRESTED . . . 267

Under the foreign yoke—Contact with foreign movements during the period of subjection—The Avestan and Old Persian languages supplanted by the Pahlavi.

THE SASANIAN PERIOD

From 226 A. D. to 651 A. D.

XLII. THE SASANIANS . . . . . 273

The resuscitation of Zoroastrian Empire—Their characteristics—The Sasanians in their intercourse with the civilized peoples of their time.

XLIII. PAHLAVI AND PAZAND LITERATURE . . . . 279

The Pahlavi language—Pahlavi manuscripts—The nature of Pahlavi literature—Pazand or Parsi—Pahlavi inscriptions—Specimens of Pahlavi, Pazand literature—Similes, metaphors, and other notable characteristics.

XLIV. SOCIETY . . . . . 295

Social divisions.

XLV. THE FAMILY . . . . . 297

Parents and children—Adoption

XLVI. WOMAN AND MARRIAGE . . . . . 300

Woman—Marriage—Forms of marriage—A wedding ceremony—Mixed marriages looked upon as detrimental to social solidarity.

CHAPTER PAGE

XLVII. EDUCATION . . . . . 305

The value of education—Preceptors and their disciples—The teaching.

XLVIII. KINGSHIP . . . . . 307

The titles of the king—The law of succession—The power of the king—The ethics of kings—The royal court—The king in public—The king in private life—The royal harem.

XLIX. ADMINISTRATION . . . . . 317

Organization of the empire—The revenue system—Coinage—Roads and post-houses.

L. LAW AND JUSTICE . . . . . 321

The nature of Sasanian legislation—The judges—Witnesses—The law of inheritance—Adoption on civic basis—Oaths—The method of administering oaths—Ordeals—The classification of crimes—Religious offences—Moral wrongs—Criminal offences and their punishments.

LI. PRIESTS AND PRIESTHOOD . . . . . 332

Priestly designations—The place of the priesthood among the Sasanians—Qualifications of a priest—Their work—The means of their livelihood.

LII. WARFARE . . . . . 336

The profession of arms—The troops and their officers—The footmen, horsemen, charioteers, and the elephant corps—The method of besieging fortified towns—The fighting—Truce and treaty—Treatment allotted to the vanquished enemy—The empire without a powerful fleet.

LIII. ART AND ARCHITECTURE . . . . . 343

Their revival—The palaces—Bas-reliefs—Fine arts.

LIV. MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH . . . . . 351

Demoniac origin of diseases—Classification of diseases—Physical cures—Professional qualifications—Remuneration of the medical practitioners—Sanitation.

LV. COMMERCE . . . . . 356

The Sasanians were not a commercial race—The Sasanian currency—Weights—Measures of distance—Lineal and quantitative measures.

LVI. CALENDAR . . . . . 361

The Pahlavi works upon the calendar—The seasons—The year—The month—The day.

CHAPTER PAGE

LVII. DRESS AND ORNAMENTS . . . . . 365

Dress—Ornaments.

LVIII. DOMESTIC ANIMALS . . . . . 367

The cattle—The dog—The horse—The elephant—The birds.

LIX. FOOD AND DRINK . . . . . 370

The chief articles of diet—The use of wine

LX. FEASTS AND FESTIVALS . . . . . 372

Occasions for festivities.

LXI. AMUSEMENTS . . . . . 374

The outdoor games—Kings, nobles, and warriors much given to chase—The indoor games—Music.

LXII. DIVINATION AND SORCERY . . . . . 378

Diviners and magicians.

LXIII. CONCLUSION . . . . . 380

INDEX . . . . . 385

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Aerpatastan.** Translated from the Avesta-Pahlavi text by S. J. Bulsara. Bombay, 1915.

**Aiyadgar-i Zariran.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by J. J. Modi. Bombay, 1899.

**Albiruni.** The Chronology of Ancient Nations. Translated by Edward Sachau. London, 1879.

**Andarz-i Atarpat-i Maraspand.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Peshutan Dastur Behramji Sanjana. Bombay, 1885.

**Andarz-i Khusru-i Kavatan.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Peshutan Dastur Behramji Sanjana. Bombay, 1885.

**Aogemadaecha.** The Pazand and Sanskrit texts, edited and translated into German by Wilhelm Geiger. Erlangen, 1878.

**Aogemadaecha.** Translated into English by James Darmesteter. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 4, second edition.

**Arda Viraf.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Hoshangji Jamaspji Asa, Martin Haug and E. W. West. Bombay, 1872.

**Avesta.** The Sacred Books of the Parsis. Edited by Karl F. Geldner. Stuttgart, 1885-1896. (For the Avestan Fragments see N. L. Westergaard's *Zendavesta,* Copenhagen, 1852-1854.)

**Avesta.** Translated into French by C. de Harlez. Avesta. Livre sacre du Zoroastrisme. Paris, 1881.

**Avesta.** Translated into French by James Darmesteter. Le Zend-Avesta. 3 vols. Paris, 1892, 1893. (*Annales du Musée Guimet,* vols. 21, 22, 24).

**Avesta.** Translated into English by James Darmesteter and L. H. Mills. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vols. 4, 23, 31.

**Avesta.** Translated into German by Fritz Wolff. Strassburg, 1910. [For the German translation of the Gathas see Christian Bartholomae's *Die Gatha's des Avesta,* Strassburg, 1905. See also the English rendering of Bartholomae's German translation in *Early Zoroastrianism,* by J. H. Moulton, London, 1913.]

**Avesta, Pahlavi, and Ancient Persian Studies in Honour of the late Shams-ul Ulama Dastur Peshotanji Behramji Sanjana.** Strassburg, 1904.

**Bahman Yasht.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 5.

**Bartholomae, Christian.** Altiranisches Worterbuch. Strassburg, 1904.

**Benjamin, S. G. W.** Persia. London.

**Bharucha, Sheriarji D.** A Brief Sketch of the Zoroastrian Religion and customs. Bombay, 1893.

**Böklen, E.** Die Verwandtschaft der jüdisch-christlichen mit der parsischen Eschatologie. Göttingen, 1902.

**Browne, E. G.** A Literary History of Persia, vol. 1. New York, 1902.

**Buch, M. A.** Zoroastrian Ethics. Baroda, 1919.

**Bundahishn.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 5.

**Bundahishn.** An Untranslated Chapter of the Bundehesh. Edited and translated by Jivanij Jamshedji Modi, in *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.* Bombay ,1902.

**Cama Memorial Volume.** Edited by J. J. Modi. Bombay, 1900

**Carter, George William.** Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Boston.

**Casartelli, L. C.** The Philosophy of the Mazdayasnian Religion under the Sassanids. Translated from the French by Firoz Jamaspji Jamasp Asa. Bombay, 1889.

**Cheyne, T. K.** Book of Psalms, its origin, and its relation to Zoroastrianism. In *Semitic Studies in Memory of Rev. Dr. A. Kohut.* Berlin, 1897.

**Christensen, Arthur.** L'Empire des Sasanides. Kobenhavn, 1907. Translated from the French by G. K. Nariman in

Journal of the Iranian Association, vol. 7, no. 10—vol. 9, no. 4. Bombay, 1919, 1920.

**Ctesias.** The Fragments of the Persika of Ktesias, ed. John Gilmore. London, 1888.

**Cumont, Franz.** The Mysteries of Mithra. Translated from the French by T. J. McCormack. Chicago, 1903.

**Curzon, G. N.** Persia and the Persian Question, 2 vols. London, 1892.

**Dadistan-i Dinik.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 18.

**Delattre, A.** Le Peuple et L'Empire des Mèdes. Bruscelles, 1883.

**Dhalla, M. N.** Zoroastrian Theology. New York, 1914.

**Dieulafoy, Marcel A.** L'Art Antique de la Perse. 5 vols. Paris, 1884-1885.

**Dinkard.** Books 3-9. Edited and translated from the Pahlavi text by Peshutan and Darab Sanjana. Vols. 1-16. Bombay, 1874-1917.

**Firdausi.** Le Livre des Rois, traduit et commente par Jules Mohl. 7 vols. Paris, 1876-1878.

**Firdausi.** Translated into English by A. G. Warner and E. Warner. Vols. 1-7. London, 1905-1912.

**Flandin, E. N.,** and **Coste, X. P.** Voyage en Perse. 8 vols. Paris, 1843-1854. (Relation du Voyage, 2 vols.; Perse Ancienne, texte, 1 vol., planches, 4 vols.; Perse Moderne, 1 vol.)

**Fluegel, M.** The Zend-Avesta and Eastern Religions. Baltimore, 1898.

**Ganj-i Shayigan.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Peshutan Dastur Behramji Sanjana. Bombay, 1885.

**Geiger, Wilhelm.** Ostiranische Kultur im Altertum. Erlangen, 1882. Translated from the German by Darab Dastur Peshutan Sanjana. 2 vols. London, 1885, 1886.

**Geldner, Karl.** Uber die Metrik des Jungern Avesta. Tubingen, 1877.

**Gibbon, Edward.** The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. London.

**Gobineau, Comte de.** Histoire Des Perses. 2 vols. Paris, 1869.

**Hadokht Nask.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Hoshangji Jamaspji Asa, Martin Haug, and E. W. West. Bombay, 1872.

**Haug, Martin.** Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis. 3d ed. Edited and enlarged by E. W. West, London, 1884.

**Henry, Victor.** Le Parsisme. Paris, 1905.

**Herzfeld, Ernst.** Am Tor von Asien. Berlin, 1920.

**Hoffmann, Georg.** Auszuge aus Syrischen Akten Persischer Martyrer. Leipzig, 1880.

**Hoshang Memorial Volume.** By various scholars. Bombay, 1918.

**Hovelacque, A.** L'Avesta, Zoroaster et le Mazdaisme. Paris, 1880.

**Hyde, Thomas.** Historia Religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum. Oxford, 1700.

**Jackson, A. V. Williams.** Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran. New York, 1899.

**Jackson, A. V. Williams.** Die Iranische Religion. In *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, vol. 2, pp. 612-708. Strassburg, 1896-1904.

**Jackson, A. V. Williams.** Persia Past and Present. New York, 1906.

**Jackson, A. V. Williams.** Early Persian Poetry. New York, 1920.

**Jamaspi.** Edited and translated from the Pahlavi-Pazand texts by J. J. Modi. Bombay, 1903.

**Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume.** Edited by J. J. Modi. Bombay, 1914.

**Justi, Ferdinand.** Geschichte Irans von den Ältesten Zeiten bis zum Ausgang der Sasaniden. In *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, 2, 395-550. Strassburg, 1896-1904.

**Justi, Ferdinand.** Empire of the Persians. In *History of All Nations*, vol. 2. Philadelphia and New York, 1905.

**Justi, Ferdinand.** Iranisches Namenbuch. Marburg, 1895.

**Karaka, Dosabhai F.** History of the Parsis. 2 vols. London, 1884.

**Karname-i Artakhshir-i Papakan.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana. Bombay, 1896.

**Kershasp, P.** Studies in Ancient Persian History. London, 1905.

**King, L. W.,** and **Thompson,** R. C. The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia. London, 1907.

**Kohut, Alexander.** The Jewish Angelology and Demonology based upon Parsism. Translated from the German by K. R. Cama. Bombay, 1883.

**Labourt, J.** Le Christianisme dans L'Empire Perse. Paris, 1904.

**Lehmann, Edvard.** Zarathushtra. Kobenhavn, 1899.

**Madigan-i Chatrang.** The Pahlavi text, edited and translated by Peshutan Dastur Behramji Sanjana. Bombay, 1885.

**Madigan-i Hazar Dadistan.** Ed. by Modi, J. J. Poona, 1901.

**Madigan-i Hazar Dadistan.** Part 2. Ed. by Anklesaria, T. D. Bombay, 1913.

**Malcolm, John.** History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present time. 2 vols. London, 1815.

**Marquart, J.** Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1896, 1905.

**Masudi, Al.** Maçoudi, Les Prairies d'Or, ed. et tr. C. Barbier de Meynard. 9 vols. Paris, 1861-1877.

**Menant, D.** Les Parsis. Paris, 1898. Translated into English by M. M. Murzban, 2 vols. Bombay, 1917.

**Mills, L. H.** Zarathushtra and the Greeks. Leipzig, 1903, 1904.

**Mills, L. H.** Zarathushtra, Philo, the Achaemenids and Israel. Leipzig, 1905, 1906.

**Mills, L. H.** Avesta Eschatology compared with the Books of Daniel and Revelations. Chicago, 1908.

**Mills, L. H.** Our Own Religion in Ancient Persia. Oxford, 1913.

**Minu-i Khrat.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 24.

**Mirkhond.** Memoires sur Diverses Antiquites de la Perse. Translated by Silvestre de Sacy. Paris, 1793.

**Mirkhond.** History of the Early Kings of Persia. Translated by David Shea. London, 1832.

**Modi, J. J.** Education Among the Ancient Iranians. Bombay, 1905.

**Modi, J. J.** Moral Extracts from Zoroastrian Books. Bombay, 1914.

**Morgan, J. de.** Mission Scientifique en Perse, vol. 2, Etudes geographiques, Paris, 1895. Vol. 4, Recherches archeologiques. Paris, 1896.

**Moulton, James H.** Early Religious Poetry of Persia. Cambridge, 1911.

**Moulton, James H.** Early Zoroastrianism. London, 1913.

**Nariman, G. K.** Iranian Influence on Moslem Literature. Part 1. Translated from the Russian of M. Inostranzev with supplementary appendices. Bombay, 1918.

**Nirangastan.** Translated from the Avesta-Pahlavi text by S. J. Bulsara, 1915.

**Nöldeke, Th.** Aufsätze zur Persischen Geschichte. Leipzig, 1887.

**Perrot, G.,** and **Chipiez, C.** Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquite, vol. 5, Perse, etc., Paris, 1890. (Eng. version). History of Art in Persia. New York, 1892.

**Pettazzoni, R.** La Religione di Zarathustra. Bologna, 1920.

**Phythian-Adams, W. J.** Mithraism. London, 1915.

**Pithawalla, M. B.** Steps to Prophet Zoroaster. Poona, 1916.

**Prasek, Justin V.** Geschichte der Meder und Perser. 2 vols. Gotha, 1906.

**Ragozin, Z. A.** Media. New York, 1888.

**Rapp, A.** The Religion and Customs of the Persians and other Iranians, as described by the Grecian and Roman Authors. Translated from the German by K. R. Cama. Bombay, 1876-1879.

**Rawlinson, George.** The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, Chaldea, Assyria, Babylon, Media, and Persia. 4 vols. London, 1862-1867.

**Rawlinson, George.** The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy. London, 1873.

**Rawlinson, George.** The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy. London, 1876.

**Rawlinson, George.** Parthia. London, 1894.

**Reuterskiold, Edgar.** Zarathustras. Uppsala, 1914.

**Rindtorff, E.** Die Religion des Zarathushtra. Weimar, 1897.

**Sachau, Edward.** See Albiruni.

**Sad Dar.** Translated from the Pahlavi-Pazand text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 24.

**Sanjana, Darab P.** Zarathushtra in the Gathas and the Greek and Roman Classics. Translated from the German of Geiger and Windischmann. Leipzig, 1897.

**Sanjana, Rastamji E.** Zarathushtra and Zarathushtrianism in the Avesta. Leipzig, 1906.

**Sarre, Friedrich** and **Harzfeld, Ernst.** Iranische Felsreliefs. Berlin, 1910.

**Scheftelowitz, J.** Die Altpersische Religion und das Judentum Geissen, 1920.

**Shah Namah.** See Firdausi.

**Shatroiha-i Airan.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. Bombay, 1899.

**Shayast la Shayast.** Translated from the Pahlavi text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 5.

**Shea, David.** See Mirkhond.

**Shikand Gumanik Vijar.** Translated from the Pahlavi-Pazand text by E. W. West. In *Sacred Books of the East,* vol. 24.

**Silvestre de Sacy.** See Mirkhond.

**Spiegel, Fr.** Eranische Alterthumskunde. 3 vols. Leipzig, 1877, 1878.

**Spiegel, Fr.** Die Arische Periode. Leipzig, 1881.

**Spiegel Memorial Volume.** Edited by Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. Bombay, 1908.

**Stave, E.** Ueber den Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judentum. Haarlem, 1898.

**Stolze, F.,** and **Andreas, F. C.** Persepolis. 2 vols. Berlin, 1882.

**Sykes, P. M.** A History of Persia. 2 vols. London, 1915.

**Tabari, al-.** Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden, aus der Arabischen Chronik des Tabari, von Theodor Nöldeke. Leiden, 1879.

**Thaalibi, al-.** Histoire des Rois des Perses. Texte Arabe publie et traduit par H. Zotenberg. Paris, 1900.

**Tiele, C. P.** The Religion of the Iranian Peoples. Translated from the German by G. K. Nariman. Part 1, Bombay, 1912. A considerable portion of Part 2 in *Asha,* vol. 1., Nos. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9-12, Karachi, 1910, 1911.

**Tolman, H. C.** Ancient Persian Lexicon. Nashville, 1908.

**Unvala, J. M.** The Pahlavi text 'King Husrav and his boy.' Paris.

**Weissbach, F. H.** Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden. Leipzig, 1911.

**West, E. W.** Pahlavi Literature. In *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie,* 2. 75-129, Strassburg, 1896-1904.

**Wigram, W. A.** The Assyrian Church. London, 1910.

**Yakut.** Dictionnaire géographique, historique, et litteraire de la Perse, extrait du Módjem el-Bouldan de Yaquot, par C. Barbier de Meynard. Paris, 1861.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aerpt | = | Aerpatistan |
| AfrG | = | Afrıngan-i Gahanbar. |
| Air. Wb. | = | Altiranisches Worterbuch (Bartholomae). |
| AnAtM. | = | Andarz-i Atarpat-ı Maraspand. |
| AnKhK. | = | Andarz-i Khusru-i Kavatan |
| Aog. | = | Aogemadaecha. |
| Artax. Pers. | = | inscriptions of Artaxerxes at Persepolis. |
| Av. | = | Avesta. |
| AV. | = | Arda Viraf. |
| Bd. | = | Bundahishn. |
| Bh. | = | Behistan. |
| bk. | = | book. |
| BYt. | = | Pahlavi Bahman Yasht. |
| cf. | = | *(confer)*, compare. |
| Dar. Alv. | = | inscriptions of Darius on Mt. Alvand (Elvend), near Hamadan. |
| Dar. Pers. | = | inscriptions of Darius at Persepolis. |
| Dd. | = | Dadistan-i Denik. |
| Dk. | = | Dinkard. |
| ed. | = | edition of, edited by |
| Eng. | = | English. |
| EpM. | = | Epistles of Manushchihr. |
| ERE. | = | Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (Hastings). |
| G. | = | Gah. |
| GIrPh. | = | Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie. |
| Gs. | = | Ganj-i Shayigan. |
| Guj. | = | Gujarati. |
| Hj. | = | Hajiabad. |
| Hn. | = | Hadokht Nask. |
| i. e. | = | *(id est)*, that is. |
| *ibid.* | = | *(ibidem)*, in the same work. |
| Inscr. | = | Inscription. |
| introd. | = | introduction. |
| Is. | = | Isaiah. |
| JA. | = | Journal Asiatique. |
| JIA. | = | Journal of the Iranian Association. |
| JRAS. | = | Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. |
| KrNArtP. | = | Karname-i Artakhshir-i Papakan. |
| Mkh. | = | Menuk-i Khrat. |
| NR. | = | inscriptions of Darius at Naksh-i Rustam. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nr. | = | Nirangistan. |
| Ny. | = | Nyaish. |
| op. cit. | = | *(opus citatum)*, the work previously cited. |
| Pers. | = | Persian. |
| Phl. | = | Pahlavi. |
| Pt. | = | Patit. |
| Rv. | = | Rivayat. |
| SBE. | = | Sacred Books of the East. |
| Sd. | = | Sad Dar. |
| Sg. | = | Shikand Gumanik Vijar. |
| ShN. | = | Shah Namah. |
| Skt. | = | Sanskrit. |
| SlS. | = | Shayast-la-Shayast. |
| Sr. | = | Sirozah |
| TdFr. | = | Tahmuras Fragment. |
| tr. | = | translated by, translation of. |
| Vd. | = | Vendidad. |
| vol. | = | volume |
| Vsp. | = | Visperad. |
| WFr. | = | Westergaard Fragment. |
| Xerx. Pers. | = | inscriptions of Xerxes at Persepolis. |
| Ys. | = | Yasna. |
| Yt. | = | Yasht. |
| YtZ. | = | Aiyadgar-i Zariran. |
| ZDMG. | = | Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft. |
| Zsp. | = | Zatsparam. |

# INTRODUCTION

**Scope of the work.** Zoroastrian Persia has filled the greatest number of pages in the ancient history of the East, and has made a name that will live as long as time endures. The mighty empires of the ancient Persians covered a vast portion of Ahura Mazda's earth and included nearly all civilized nations. Three thousand years and more before the present day Zarathushtra, the prophet of Persia preached his excellent religion which has so greatly enriched the religious thought of the world, and, according to the consensus of opinion of Biblical scholars, has influenced, in their making, three of the great world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Mithraism and Manichaeism, offshoots of Zoroastrianism, penetrated into European territory, and have left evidences of their influence in the ruins of temples and in sacred literature. The civilizations of the East and the West met in Persia for the first time in history under the Parsi kings of the Achaemenian dynasty. Zoroastrian Persia played the part of intermediary between East and West for several centuries, and her people enjoyed an importance quite unique in the world's history, from about 1000 B. C. to the seventh century A. D., when their vast empire vanished.

Since Anquetil du Perron discovered Ancient Iran to the western world in 1771, and Grotenfend and Rawlinson later resurrected the Ancient Persian Cuneiform Inscriptions, Iranian studies have made great strides. The interpretation of Avestan and Pahlavi writings, and the archæological explorations in the ruins of ancient monuments in Persia have occasioned an illuminating literature dealing with the various cultural periods of Iranian history. The present work, prepared on the lines of my previous book, *Zoroastrian Theology,* attempts to present in a concise form, within the covers of a single volume, the history of Zoroastrian Civilization as a whole; that is, from the beginning of the first prehistoric Pishdadian dynasty to the downfall of the last Zoroastrian Empire.

**Arrangement.** Zoroastrian Civilization in Ancient Iran followed the fortunes of Iranian sovereignty and I have therefore

named the different periods of the civilization after the various dynasties that have ruled over the country from the earliest times to the passing away of the last Zoroastrian Empire. These are: 1. The Pishdadian Period, 2. The Kianian Period, 3. The Median Period, 4. The Achaemenian Period, 5. The Period of Stagnation, 6. The Sasanian Period. I have endeavored to coördinate the cultural movements of the different periods of Zoroastrian Civilization. This, however, is not always possible. The chain of evidence with which we have to deal is so often broken, and the lost links are so many, that it is often difficult to trace the evolution of cultural thought step by step. We have a notable example in the five centuries intervening between the overthrow of the Achaemenians and the rise of the Sasanian power, which have left so meagre remains that we find Firdausi dismissing them in less than five pages.

The early Aryan settlers of Persia had brought with them the institutions of Indo-Iranian civilization from their primitive home, and developed them in Eastern Iran during the Pishdadian period. The sources of information on the Pishdadian period are the Avestan texts, written sometime at the close of the second millennium B. C., that is, about three thousand years after the reign of the first Pishdadian king.

This earliest written tradition recorded in the Avestan tongue later passed into the Pahlavi works during the Sasanian period, and became a source of information for Firdausi, who composed his immortal Iranian epic, Shah Namah, in the seventh century, A. D., that is about four centuries after the collapse of the last Zoroastrian Empire. In addition to this written material before him, the poet had access to the oral tradition preserved in the form of mythical stories and romantic tales and ballads in praise of heroes and kings. With these sources of information, Firdausi undertakes to give a consecutive account of the Pishdadian kings, some of whom are said to have ruled for five hundred and seven hundred years, or even longer. The poet begins with the creation, and opens his narrative with the life story of the primeval man. Myth and history, legend and romance completely merge into one another in his account of this period. Moreover, in describing the civilization of primitive Iran, he often pictures the life of the people who lived some four thousand years before him in the setting of his own time, and describes the culture of the

ancient people in terms of the culture of his contemporaries. It is necessary, therefore, to proceed with caution in utilizing these poetic compositions, in our endeavour to construct an historical account of the life and culture of these ancient people. Truth to say, it is not possible, with such inadequate data, to determine the successive stages of progress that the ancient Iranians made from primitive barbarism to a semi-civilized state of progress during the Pishdadian rule.

In addition to these accounts we have Iranian tradition recorded in the histories of Moslem writers in Arabic and Persian In these works, unfortunately romance often overshadows sober history in delineating the achievements of this remote period.

The Kianian Period opens much the same way as did the Pishdadian. The account of the early Kianian kings given in the epic of Firdausi and the works of other Moslem writers, is a similar compound of history, folklore, and legend, and we are left bewildered in the mythological maze till we reach the closing period of this second Iranian dynasty. It is only when we are nearing the reign of Vishtaspa, Zarathushtra's royal patron, that we find ourselves placed on the clear historical ground. Civilization hereafter, with Zarathushtra, the prophet, as its beacon-light, becomes religious in character, and of indigenous growth.

The peace of the Bactrian region where the Kianians ruled has not yet been disturbed by the spade of the explorer. Consequently we have no inscriptions or tablets, pottery or bricks, stone or bronze implements or any such archæological finds to acquaint us with the cultural stage of this period. The Avestan works with their Pahlavi supplements, the Shah Namah, and the later Arabian and Persian works remain the only sources of information on its cultural movements.

The Median and Achaemenian Periods rank third and fourth in our arrangement. Eastern Iranian supremacy soon passes its prime and with the change of political sphere to the west of Iran, the people can no longer develop the indigenous culture uninterruptedly. The Medes, and more especially their greater successors, the Achaemenian kings, brought the inheritance of the civilization of Babylonia and Assyria to their people, by their conquests, with the result that, though Iranian civilization retained its original Aryan character, it could not remain uninfluenced by Semitic culture. With civilized races, such as the

Hebrews, Egyptians and Indians, brought under Parsi sway, the inlets of diverse cultures became wide during two centuries and more of the Achaemenian rule. The direct intercourse established between Persia and Greece brought the Iranian and Hellenic civilizations into close touch, until the Persian Empire fell before Alexander, and thereby the East was for the first time humbled by the West.

Apart from the Ancient Persian Cuneiform Inscriptions and the ruins of the palaces and tombs of the Achaemenian kings, we have no indigenous records to tell us the story of the life and achievements of the people of this period. We have to turn, therefore, for this information to the writers of Greece, a country with which Archaemenian Persia was in a state of perennial warfare.

The influx of new races with new cultures continued during the five centuries of alien dominion. It is difficult to penetrate the mists that hang over this period, and to ascertain the course which Zoroastrian civilization pursued. I have labelled this, the fifth period in the arrangement of the present work, the Period of Stagnation.

With the rise of the Sasanians, Zoroastrian Iran sprang once more into life, and the empire was reconstructed. The last Zoroastrian dynasty lifted the heavy veil of darkness that had enveloped Iranian civilization for five centuries, and during its glorious and eventful life of four hundred years established close relations with two new civilizations, the Christian and the Byzantine.

The Pahlavi works, the Shah Namah, the Arab, the Persian, the Armenian and the Syrian writers of the East, and the Roman historians of the West, deal with the progress of Zoroastrian Civilization during the Sasanian, or the last Period.

Zoroastrian Persia's part was now played, and the dark hour struck when she had run her appointed course. The vast human reservoir in Arabia burst its banks and engulfed Iran. The last Zoroastrian Empire passed away in 651 A. D. The Iranian drama closed, the curtain dropped for the last time, and the actors left their native stage to wander hereafter from place to place telling the sorrowful tale of their race, once so high in the scale of nations. Zoroastrian Persia is dead.

# THE PISHDADIAN PERIOD

## FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO ABOUT 2000 B. C

# ZOROASTRIAN CIVILIZATION

## CHAPTER I

## THE PISHDADIAN IRAN

**The ancient Iranians.** The people who originated Zoroastrian Civilization on the lofty plateau of Ancient Iran were Aryans. They have been the specially favoured people of Ahura Mazda since the days of their progenitor, Gaya Maretan, the first man who gave ear to his divine precepts.[1] His successor Haoshyangha, we are informed, gathered the people under his banner and founded the first Iranian dynasty, popularly known as the Pishdadian. Divine Glory from Ahura Mazda alighted upon the kings of this dynasty,[2] and under their rule the Iranians laid the foundations of the civilization which later centred about the sublime personality of Zarathushtra.

Airyana Vaejah, 'the cradle of the Aryans,' probably situated somewhere in the northern steppes of Turkestan, was their primitive home. It was the first of the lands created by Ahura Mazda.[3] Here it was that Ahura Mazda once sacrificed unto Vayu,[4] and in this happy land the creator summoned a joint conference of the heavenly angels and the best of men, under the leadership of King Yima.[5] In the eventful reign of this illustrious king, we are informed, mankind, as well as flocks and herds, increased so greatly that Airyana Vaejah could no longer contain them. The pressing need of more room for the growing population occasioned the first great Iranian migration. Three times did the illustrious king lead his overflowing subjects to migrate southwards, on the way of the sun.[6] Thus, the territory of Airyana Vaejah was constantly increased, and its boundaries were extended. Not yet, however, were the people destined to devote

[1] Yt. 13. 87.
[2] Sr. 1. 9, 25; 2. 9, 25; Yt. 18. 7, 8.
[3] Vd. 1. 3.
[4] Yt. 15. 2.
[5] Vd. 2. 21.
[6] Vd. 2. 9-19.

themselves unmolested to the peaceful pursuits of life. Angra Mainyu, it seems, dogged their steps and contrived to inundate their country with an icy deluge. Ahura Mazda warned Yima of this coming calamity,[7] and the shepherd king, following the divine advice, retreated before the encroaching storm with his men, his flocks and herds, to a temperate clime.[8] The Airyana Vaejah of high renown, once clothed with luxuriant vegetation, was now invaded by the desolation of extreme winter, and became a wilderness too cold for human habitation. Airyana Vaejah, the earthly paradise of the Iranians, was lost, but its sweet memory could not perish, and bards long continued to sing the glories of this homeland of the Aryans. Sore at heart the infant race turned its steps still further to the south, and gave the same loving designation Airyana, or Iran, to its new home. This ancient name, it is interesting to note, has survived all geographical, racial, and political changes and still remains as the native name of Persia.

**Contact with non-Aryan peoples.** Formidable as were the obstacles that nature placed in the way of the young people in their search for a habitable home, there were greater hardships still in store for them from other sources. Besides fighting the rigours of an inclement climate, they had to encounter the stubborn opposition of wild beasts and races of savage men along the way of their onward move. However, the youthful vigour of these hardy people enabled them to overcome all difficulties. They succeeded in vanquishing and enslaving the aborigines, or driving them from their native places into the hills, and planting their own colonies in the newly conquered regions. The non-Aryan savages whom the Aryans had displaced became their inveterate foes, and, partly to avenge the wrong that the newcomers had done them, and partly for the purpose of enriching themselves without labour by plundering their rich settlements, they frequently poured down in great numbers from their mountain homes, pillaging the possessions of the industrious Iranian settlers. Kings Haoshyangha and Takhma Urupi are seen invoking various divinities for help in the wars waged against these aboriginal tribes that devastated the lands of the Iranians.[9] The latter king seems to have inflicted such overwhelming defeats

[7] Vd. 2. 22-24.
[8] Vd. 2. 25-38.
[9] Yt. 5. 21-23; 9. 3-5; 15. 7-9, 11-13; 17. 24-26.

upon these marauding non-Iranian hordes, who are dubbed the demons in human form, that tradition has styled him the Demon-Binder.[10]

The Avestan texts refer to various clans of the Iranians of this period. The most celebrated clan which came to the rescue of the Aryan race and liberated it from the foreign rule was called the Athwya.[11] Azhi Dahaka, a Semitic prince, subjugated the Iranians and ruled over them, it is alleged, for a thousand years. The Avestan works depict him as sacrificing to Ardvi Sura, the Iranian genius of water, in Babylonia.[12] This legend of Dahaka's millennial rule in Iran probably indicates the first clash of the Iranians with some Semitic tribes. Thraetaona of the Athwya clan overthrew the usurper, delivered the people who were chafing under his yoke, and restored the Kingly Glory of the Aryans that had been lost by Yima.[13] The Shah Namah refers to the contact of the Iranians with the Arabians. We are informed that three sons of the Iranian king Thraetaona married three daughters of the Arab king of Yaman.[14] It might be noted that the name of this Arab king, as given in Pahlavi works, is Bukht Khusru,[15] or Patkhsrob,[16] which betrays his Aryan origin and might tempt us to believe that an Aryan ruling house had established its power over the Arabs at this early period. We are further told that the Turanians, as well as some Semitic tribes, came under the Iranian sway. King Thraetaona, it is said, divided his great empire during his lifetime between his three sons. To the eldest he gave sovereignty over the Semites of the West, to the second he gave the country of the Turanians, and reserved Iran for the youngest.[17] This is the first reference to the Turanians, who, as we shall see later, become the hereditary foes of the Iranians during the whole period of the second Iranian dynasty. The partition of the empire of the Iranian king among his three sons started a great family feud in which the allied forces of the Semitics and Turanians, under the two Iranian

[10] ShN. 1. 126.
[11] Yt. 5. 33; 9. 13; 13. 131; 15. 23; 17. 33; 19. 36.
[12] Yt. 5. 29.
[13] Yt. 19. 36.
[14] ShN. 1. 177-186.
[15] Jamasp Asana, *The day Khordad of the month Farvardin commonly called Khordadsal* in *Cama Memorial Volume*, pp. 124, 125, Bombay, 1900.
[16] Dk., vol. 13, bk. 7. intr. 34, p. 14; vol. 15, bk. 8. 12. 9, pp. 26, 27.
[17] ShN. 1. 189.

princes, fought against the Iranians. The Iranians were victorious in this struggle, and established their sovereign power over the neighbouring non-Aryan races, but hostilities with the Turanians were frequent until the close of the Pishdadian dynasty.

## CHAPTER II

## THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION IN IRAN

**Society.** In the earliest stages of their history, the people of Iran obtained the staple of life mainly by the chase. At a later period, pastoral pursuits became the chief means of livelihood. In fact, Yima, the most illustrious king of this dynasty, is surnamed the shepherd, or possessor of flocks. The shepherds who lived on grassy uplands in summer changed their residence before winter set in, and drove their flocks to warmer regions. They carried with them their dwellings which were so constructed as to be easily carried from place to place on horses and camels. Society in Iran was still unsettled. As already explained, the people were constantly moving about in search of new lands, partly with the object of escaping the rigours of the northern climate, and partly with the hope of finding fertile land to pasture their flocks. Consequently, various occupations, characteristic of states of society in which people lead a settled life, cannot be expected in this nomadic period of the people of Iran. Yet the Shah Namah records that, like various other reforms, the first organization of society in different professional orders was due to the initiative of King Yima. The four classes of the priests, warriors, husbandmen, and artisans, we are told, were made by him.[1] The Avestan texts written long after the reign of Yima recognizes, as we shall see later, first three classes only, and mentions the artisan class but once.[2] It is late in the Pahlavi period that we meet with the complete group of the four orders described in detail. The Avestan works, which show these social divisions in their earliest making, represent, as we shall see later, Zarathushtra, not Yima, as their originator. Later tradition, however, associates the name of Yima with their foundation, and Firdausi adopts this view in his Book of Kings.

**Alleged literary activities.** The first man himself and every

[1] ShN. I. 132, 133; Mirkhond, *History of the Early Kings of Persia*, tr. Shea, p. 108, London, 1832.
[2] Ys. 19. 17.

king of the Pishdadian dynasty, as alleged, wrote theological and metaphysical works. The Modern Persian version of Khishtab, Zaredasht Afshar, and Zindah Rud, all written at a very late date, depict every one of these primitive kings as contributing to the metaphysical and philosophical disquisitions. Haoshyangha, for example, is reported to have written several books, of which the most celebrated was Javidana-i Khirad. Though the first man and his royal descendants are thus alleged to have written many works, tradition accords Takhma Urupi, their successor, the honour of first bringing to mankind the knowledge of writing, believed to have been in the possession of the demons. It is said that Angra Mainyu and his infernal crew possessed the knowledge of letters. When the valiant king Takhma Urupi subjugated the Evil Spirit and vanquished the demons, he extracted from them the knowledge of seven languages.[3] The Shah Namah alleges that the total number of scripts which the demons taught this king to write was thirty, of which six at least are expressly mentioned by name. These are: Roman, Arabic, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Pahlavi.[4] Underlying this fantastic account of the demoniac origin of languages, can be detected a gleam of historical truth, if we regard these linguistic demons as some Semitic tribes with whom these early Aryans came in contact, and whose script they borrowed. This is probable, because, as we shall see later, no trace of an Aryan script of this period has reached us, and the Zoroastrian texts, written long after this period, are copied in a Semitic script.

Firdausi pictures the kings and courtiers as keenly interested in intellectual discourses. It was a custom, we are informed, to hold literary contests in the royal court. Certain learned men proposed riddles and challenged their opponents to solve them. This intellectual pastime, it is said, excited keen interest among those present, and success or failure of the contestants to answer the questions correctly was eagerly awaited.[5]

**Discoveries and inventions.** Haoshyangha, the first king of primitive Iran is, according to Iranian tradition, credited with the discovery of fire. The Shah Namah states that the king one day encountered a monster, and hurled a huge stone to kill it.

[3] Aog. 92; Mkh. 27. 21, 23.
[4] ShN. I. 127.
[5] ShN. I. 308-312.

The stone, however, chanced to strike a rock, and, forthwith, sparks of fire came out.[6] The king's claim to this discovery seems not to have passed unchallenged. The Pahlavi Bundahishn accords the honour to Mashya and Mashyoi, the first human couple created by Ahura Mazda. These first progenitors of the human race are said to have extracted fire from the plane-tree and box-tree. By blowing the fire they succeeded in producing a flame which they fed with dry grass, and leaves of lotus, date palm, and myrtle.[7] Haoshyangha, we are told, was the first man to bring iron into use and to make implements of various kinds. He is further credited with the construction of canals and irrigation works.[8] The art of weaving is said to have been introduced in the world by his successor Takhma Urupi.[9] Gold and silver, rubies and precious stones were dug out from the earth in the auspicious reign of Yima, and were used for making ornaments. The great king's throne, studded with precious stones, became the wonder of the world. Wine was made for the first time in his reign [10] and the cup-bearers served it in goblets in his court. It was Yima who first made ships to cross the sea. He was likewise the first to construct roads. He is hailed as the greatest discoverer of the age.[11] Sugar-cane was first discovered by the king, and sugar was thenceforth made from its juice.[12] The discovery of the art of medicine, ascribed by the Avestan works to Thrita, is credited by some writers to this king.[13] So strong has been the hold of his great name upon subsequent tradition that all arts and industries, discoveries and inventions have been fancifully attributed to him. Popular belief still holds that all modern discoveries and inventions were anticipated thousands of years ago by the glorious king of Ancient Iran.

**Kingship.** Though the Shah Namah depicts Gaya Maretan as the first king of Iran, with both men and beasts thriving under his beneficent sway, the sacred texts, as already seen, speak of

[6] ShN. I. 123.
[7] Bd. 15. 13.
[8] ShN. I. 123.
[9] ShN. I. 126.
[10] Mirkhond, *op. cit* 103, 104.
[11] ShN. I. 133; Mirkhond, *op. cit.* 102-104, 121.
[12] Albiruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations,* tr. Sachau, pp. 200, 201, London, 1879.
[13] Mirkhond, *op. cit.* 121.

his successor Haoshyangha as the founder of the first Iranian dynasty. Sovereignty thereafter descended in the male line, and each king who came to the throne ruled by the special favour of Ahura Mazda. A part of the Divine Majesty which belonged to the godhead descended to earth and rested upon every king. This holy symbol of earthly power which hallowed its possessor was reverenced under the designation Kingly Glory. As the occupant of the throne by special sanction of Ahura Mazda, the king was supposed to be absolute in power. But in the actual exercise of sovereignty he soon found himself surrounded by powerful chiefs and valiant heroes to whom he had to delegate some of his authority. There were wise counsellors also, whose advice was indispensable in the management of the affairs of the state, and mighty warriors, without whom he could not wage successful wars against powerful enemies. A hereditary nobility, giving allegiance to the king, but ruling independently over certain principalities, assigned in recognition of services or as a mark of the royal bounty, soon rose to power. These feudal lords lived in truly regal splendour as rulers of their petty states,[14] maintained large seraglios,[15] and contracted marriage alliances among royal families of neighbouring countries. Zal, for example, married the daughter of the king of Cabul.[16] The most influential family that was destined to serve loyally the royal house of Iran for several generations was that of Sam of Seistan. Both the king and people looked to the heroes of this family for succour in time of need. Thus, when the people, tired of misgovernment, revolted against the authority of King Naudar, they appealed to the hero for help, and showed their willingness to depose the king and give him the crown. The king, likewise, implored his assistance, writing to him that he and his ancestors had always been the guardians of the royal house, and should protect him against the wrath of the people.[17] On the death of a king, his successor, as a rule, invited the nobles and chiefs, and in their presence set the royal crown on his own head.[18] King Thraetaona in his old age crowned his grandson with his own hands,[19] and the new king delivered a coronation speech.[20] On such occasions, the warrior chiefs and feudal lords

[14] ShN. I. 240, 255, 256.
[15] ShN. I. 240.
[16] ShN. I. 318.
[17] ShN. I. 339-342.
[18] ShN. I. 174, 374.
[19] ShN. I. 232.
[20] ShN. I. 237-239.

paid their homage and swore allegiance to the new king.[21] The king managed the state affairs, in consultation with his ministers, and also called astrologers to his help, whenever he embarked upon any important affairs.[22] Usually the king accompanied the army to the battlefield, and either himself led the attack upon the enemy, or watched and guided the conduct of the battle from an elephant or from his royal tent.[23]

**Warfare.** The second among the four castes which King Yima is reputed to have founded was the warrior caste, whose function, says the poet, was to guard the royal throne and vindicate the nation's name for valour.[24] Heroic deeds upon the battlefield brought fame to the warriors. The heroes had a passion for adventures and glorious achievements which the bards celebrated in songs. The people were mostly engaged in internecine wars and fought under the direct leadership of the king. It was generally the elephant which the king rode when he marched to the field.[25] Men as well as horses were clad in mail armour made of iron.[26] Mace and sword, sling and spear, bow and arrow were the chief weapons used in warfare.[27] When the army was ready for action, the king gave a signal upon which the drums placed upon the elephants[28] were sounded, and pipes, clarions and tymbals announced to the whole army that the battle had begun.[29] The custom seems to have been that a champion from the army stood forth and challenged a warrior of the enemy to single combat.[30] The battle, however, was not decided by the result of such single fight, for the opposing armies could not long be restrained, when the champion of either side fell, and a general engagement soon took place.[31] Scouts were stationed at various places at night to watch and give speedy intelligence of the enemy if he moved, masking his movements in the dark.[32] When the victorious armies returned laden with rich

[21] ShN. I. 238, 239, 370.
[22] ShN. I. 159, 188, 194, 251, 307, 335.
[23] ShN. I. 219, 349, 350, 352.
[24] ShN. I. 132.
[25] ShN. I. 219.
[26] ShN. I. 132, 216, 352.
[27] Yt. 13. 72; Vd. 14. 9; ShN. I. 216, 217, 229, 352.
[28] ShN. I. 223.
[29] ShN. I. 219, 327, 352.
[30] ShN. I. 347.
[31] ShN. I. 349.
[32] ShN. I. 220.

booty it was lavished upon the troops.[83] Frontier towns were fortified, and we are informed that King Thraetaona was the first to introduce the digging of trenches around forts.[84]

The national standard of Iran, which remained its cherished emblem of power and greatness for generations, came into existence under peculiar circumstances during this period. When Iran was groaning under the tyrancy of the non-Aryan usurper, Azhi Dahaka, a blacksmith named Kawa led a successful revolt and liberated the Aryan population. To rouse the suffering people to rally round him he struck his leather apron upon the point of a lance and converted it into a banner. This peculiar standard was called Drafsh-i Kawan, 'the banner of Kawah,' after the name of its originator. It was later covered with silk and brocade, and every new king who ascended the throne of Iran added something to its worth by adorning it with precious jewels. This royal standard changed hands with the rise and fall of the Iranian Empire. When Alexander defeated the armies of Darius III, it passed into the hands of the Seleucids, and later found its way to the Parthians. From them it was recovered by the Sasanians, with whom it remained for fully four centuries, until finally it fell into the hands of the Arabs upon the battlefield of Qadisiya in 637 A. D.[85]

**Architectural achievements ascribed to the Pishdadians.** At this primitive stage of Iranian civilization under the Pishdadians, when the people were moving from one place to another, either as hunters in search of game or as pastoral nomads in quest of pasture lands, the dwellings would be necessarily simple and portable. In fact, the Vendidad refers to such huts of wood or felt which could be easily removed from place to place.[86] Houses and huts of thatch and reed, or of mud and clay, must have been in use among the common people. Tradition, however, refers to palaces of great architectural beauty built by King Yima. In the first place, this mighty king taught the aborigines, the demons as they are termed by the poet, to temper clay with water, to make moulds for bricks, and to lay foundations with stones and lime. Yima thus utilized this aboriginal labour in constructing magnificent palaces with lofty

[83] ShN. 1. 232.
[84] Mirkhond, *op. cit.* 187.
[85] Mirkhond, *op. cit.* 130, 136, 137.
[86] Vd. 8. 1-3.

halls, sanctuaries and baths.[37] The glamour of the great king's fame has so fascinated the popular imagination that the palaces of the Achaemenian kings are erroneously believed to have been built by him. The great platform of Persepolis is called Takht-i Jamshid, 'the throne of Jamshid,' to this day by the natives of Persia. The Rivayats state that the king built a wonderful palace with seven talismans near Pars. This palace stood until the close of the Achaemenian period, and was, we are told, eventually destroyed by Alexander.[38] The mausoleum built to hold the remains of King Thraetaona is said to have been constructed of gold and lapis lazuli. His body was laid on an ivory throne, and a crown was hung over it.[39] Among other structures, fortresses are said to have been built for the defence of the cities.[40]

**Feasts and festivals.** Some of the feasts and festivals, observed among the Zoroastrians both of Persia and India at the present day, are said to have originated with the rulers of the Pishdadian house. King Haoshyangha, for example, founded a feast called Sada to commemorate his great discovery of fire.[41] Yima, according to the sacred texts, was commissioned by Ahura Mazda to advance the world and spread civilized arts among his people. When the illustrious king succeeded in carrying out the divine behest, and prosperity and progress became evident everywhere in his reign, he desired to celebrate his achievements. For this purpose, he selected the period of the year, when nature dons her garment of green which the creator annually bestows upon her, and announced the day on which the sun enters the sign of Aries, at the vernal equinox, as the New Year's Day.[42] The festival was observed for several days, which were given over to thanksgiving, feasting, and rejoicing by all classes of people. It soon became the chief national festival of Iran, and, after some four thousand years, still remains as an imperishable memorial to the great king. It is still observed not only by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, but even by the Moslems of Persia. Thraetaona, it is said, also inaugurated the feast of Mihrgan, to commemorate another auspicious event, the

[37] ShN. I. 133.
[38] Mehrji Rana, *Rivayat-i Darab Hamajiyar*, Guj. tr. pp. 512-514, Navsari, 1896.
[39] ShN. I. 233.
[40] ShN. I. 336.
[41] ShN. I. 123, 124.
[42] ShN. I. 133, 134.

liberation of the Aryans from the non-Aryan yoke.[43] Great dynastic changes and the long centuries of hardship and confusion, which followed the collapse of the Zoroastrian Empire, have failed to destroy the continuity of this festival which is observed by the Zoroastrian community to this day.

**Dress and ornaments.** According to Iranian tradition the progenitors of mankind did not subsist in their native nudity. Leaves and the bark of trees seem to have afforded man the first natural materials for covering his body. We are informed that Mashi and Mashyoi, the first human pair, covered their bodies with herbage.[44] The second step in the art of making garments was taken when skins of animals were used for clothing.[45] The Shah Namah represents the primeval man and his descendants as dressed in leopard-skins.[46] The first king who graced the throne of Iran in pre-historic times is said to have introduced the use of skins of squirrel, ermine, fox and sable for making garments.[47] Ardvi Sura, the genius of water, puts on a garment made of beaver skin, which is said to be the finest coloured of all, shining with silvery and golden sheen when properly treated.[48] Later, the hair of animals was woven into cloth, and this marks the third stage in man's attempt to provide himself with a covering for shelter against the rigours of climate, or, with the gradual development of the sense of decency, for avoiding objectionable exposure of his person.[49] The art of clothing attains perfection in the Golden Age of Yima, when men and women clothed themselves with garments made of cotton and silk, fine fabrics and rich brocades.[50] The use of garments made of leather and skins of animals did not stop altogether with the wearing of cloth. Both skin and woven materials continue to be used as garments among the people.[51] Coats made of long-haired sheepskin, and clothes lined with furs naturally proved indispensable during the heavy winters which the Aryan settlers of Iran had to encounter. The sacred shirt and

[43] ShN. I. 174, 175; Mirkhond, *op. cit.* 133.
[44] Bd. 15. 10.
[45] Bd. 15. 15.
[46] ShN. I. 118-120.
[47] ShN. I. 124.
[48] Yt. 5. 129.
[49] Bd. 15. 15; ShN. I. 126.
[50] ShN. I. 132.
[51] Vd. 8. 23-25; Dk. vol. 16, bk. 8. 23. 9, p. 6.

girdle which later becomes the indispensable outward symbol of Zoroastrians of both sexes is said to have been introduced by Yima.[52]

Women decorated their persons with rich jewels. This luxury, so closely associated with the fair sex, was indulged in, also, by men of high rank, who wore ear-rings, necklaces, and armlets.[53]

[52] Dd. 39. 19, 22; Sd. 10. 3.
[53] ShN. 1. 210, 255.

## CHAPTER III

## ANCIENT IRANIAN VIEW OF LIFE

**Life is all cheer to the ancient Iranians.** The Iranian people lived in the exhilarating atmosphere of hopes and ambitions, for those were the sunny days of their youth. With light and nimble steps they climbed the hills, or descended into the valleys to pasture their flocks. Through woods and dales they followed the chase, or angled upon the lakes. To them all nature seemed a joyous harmony. The winds of Vayu that made the woodlands sing; the ripples of the gliding water that played over the pebbles in the brooks; the stars that marched steadily on their courses, all brought cheer to their hearts. Cheer nerved them to hard toil, and encouraged them to bear their burdens ungrudgingly. The richness of exuberant life empowered them to surmount all obstacles in their way. These pioneers of civilization had as their stupendous task to wrest the sceptre of sovereignty from the clutches of dragons and mammoths, and to install the human in place of the brute upon earth. The Shah Namah pictures the heroes of this period as constantly engaged in combats with wild animals and giant creatures, no less formidable than those which, at a later period, Rustam and Asfandiyar encountered in their seven days' labours. They thus helped to clear the earth of its pests, and thereby made possible secure living and civilization.

**Man in relation to his invisible benefactors.** Ahura Mazda, it is said, had not left mankind groping in the dark in its early infancy. He instructed the very first man who descended upon the earth in the laws of life and of righteousness.[1] He asked the glorious king Yima to be his prophet, but the king pleaded his inability to undertake the mighty task.[2] The surroundings in which man lived could not however fail to implant in his youthful mind crude religious ideas that would influence the conduct of his life. He lived with nature, and found himself dependent for his life, food, and shelter upon the physical forces

[1] Yt. 13. 87. [2] Vd. 2. 3.

around him. He pictured them as throbbing with life, and soon learned to believe that the security of his being lay in placating these hidden powers that controlled and guided the course of nature. The earth, the waters, and the trees below, as also the stars, and the sun, and the moon, and the clouds above, were, he thought, alike presided over by Ahuras or invisible lords. He thanked one such intelligence who lighted the earth during the day, and gave warmth to him, his animals and his fields; he bowed before another for showering his fields with the fructifying waters, enabling him to reap good harvests, and, with outstretched hands, invoked yet another lord for the health of his body. Thus, gradually, it came about that a great host of higher intelligences claimed man's adoration for the various gifts and boons which they were, severally, believed capable of bestowing.

These heavenly beings had loaded man with bounties, and, therefore, it became his pious duty to consecrate goodly offerings in their honour. With feelings of thankfulness he invoked them with prayers, sacrificed cooked repasts of cattle and birds unto them, and fervently besought them to sanctify the sacred feasts with their presence.

**Man combats his seen and unseen enemies with the help of higher powers.** Man had deified nature and had learned to regard the invisible principles behind physical forces as the sole arbiters of his weal or woe upon earth. Life's experience, however, soon showed him that the empire of the kindly agencies who presided over his destinies was not absolute. When the stormy winds blew and hailstones fell; when blighting cold and burning heat made his life miserable, and when, at times, he found himself smitten by plague and pestilence, or buffeted by storms and earthquakes, he concluded that there must be some malevolent agencies contesting the supreme power of the good genii, and often successfully thwarting and upsetting their beneficent work. Thus, creative imagination peopled the natural world with a host of evil forces which constantly waged war upon the unseen benefactors of mankind. These enemies of angels were naturally the enemies of man also. Therefore, it was in the interest of man to remain steadfast and loyal to the good powers, and to co-operate with them in their struggle against the common foe. It was believed that, by ceremonial performances and sacrificial offerings, man could strengthen the

hands of the powers of good in their fight with those of evil. For example, Tishtrya, the genius of rain, contrives to produce the rain for the parched land which Apaosha, the demon of drought, has seized in his deadly grip. A fierce struggle ensues between the two, and Tishtrya suffers defeat at the hands of his adversary. Tishtrya, thereupon, exclaims in sorrow that he has been defeated in his struggle with Apaosha, because mankind neglected to strengthen him with sacrificial offerings.[3] Thus, man's own interest, as well as his duty towards his heavenly protectors, taught him to fortify himself against the hostile powers of evil. The sturdy Iranians of this period are never seen bowing the knee to the evil forces, in order to placate them by sacrificial offerings, but are found incessantly combating the enemies of the world of goodness.

Besides these common enemies of the angels and of the Iranians, against whom we have seen them fighting, there are other enemies whom they had often to combat jointly. The aborigines whom the Iranians had displaced from their abodes, and other hostile tribes, were the human foes of the Aryan settlers. The angels whom the Iranians faithfully honoured viewed the enemies of their worshippers as their own enemies. Consequently, when the Aryans went to war, they and their heavenly guardians united in opposing a common front to the enemy. When the enemy king, Dahaka, conspires to win the tribal divinities of Iran to his side by sacrificial offerings, his sacrifices are rejected.[4] The Iranian kings, on the other hand, invoke the help of their communal divinities, and it is always given.[5]

[3] Yt. 8. 23, 24.
[4] Yt. 5. 29-31; 15. 19-21.
[5] Yt. 5. 21-28, 32-35; 9. 3-16; 15. 7-17, 19-21, 23-25; 17. 24-35.

# THE KIANIAN PERIOD

FROM ABOUT 2000 B. C. TO ABOUT 700 B. C.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE KIANIAN IRAN

**The Iranians flood the Persian tableland.** The waves of the early Aryan migrations continued to pour southwards until about 2000 B. C., when we find the Indo-Iranians settled in the neighbourhood of Eastern Iran. It is not possible, with our present knowledge, to say at what time occurred the final separation between the Indo-Iranian groups of the Aryan race. Equally difficult is it to identify the place of their parting. The migratory Aryans left behind them no milestones to indicate the route which they had taken from their primitive home to their new abodes. It may be inferred, however, from such scanty information as we can gather from the sacred books of both Iranians and Indians, that the disintegrating process began at some time between 2000 and 1500 B. C. Common references, moreover, to rivers and places in the ancient scriptures of Persia and India point to Afghanistan as the probable last stage of the great journey, where the two Aryan groups still camped together. The Iranian group planted its colony, and ultimately succeeded in establishing itself, in Bactria. The Iranians saw their near kinsmen leaving them in successive waves and migrating southeastward, until they had disappeared behind the huge barriers of the Hindukush.

Bactria now becomes the central seat of power, whence Iranian civilization spread to adjoining lands. It was at the Bactrian Court that Zarathushtra found his royal patron in the person of King Vishtaspa. We cannot say how far the Bactrian Kingdom extended, but the geographical data yielded by the Avestan texts lead us to believe that the Aryan settlers had carried their civilizing influence far beyond the recognized boundaries of Bactria. The tracts of territory which they traversed, either in pursuit of peaceful occupations or for the purpose of waging wars of conquest, were vast indeed. Sogdiana and the countries between the Oxus and Jaxartes in the north were not unknown to them. In the south they were in frequent contact with the people of

Seistan and of the territories around the river Helmand, and their acquaintance reaches far in the extreme southeast to the Punjab. Their conquering hordes penetrated through the northern part of Khorasan in the west, to repel the frequent onslaughts of the aboriginal tribes of Gilan and Mazandaran, and their traditional associations extended still further to the waters of the Caspian Sea, and to the range of Mount Elburz. The Iranian settlements thus widened greatly, and the people shifted far from their primitive home, but the name Airyana Vaejah still persisted, and throughout the Kianian period continued to be celebrated as the best of lands.[1] It is here that Ahura Mazda is depicted as sacrificing unto Ardvi Sura and praying that Zarathushtra may be the bearer of his divine message to mankind.[2] The prophet is said to have recited Ahuna Vairya, the most sacred formula of his new faith, in Airyana Vaejah.[3] Haosravah, the pre-Zoroastrian king of the Kian dynasty, Zarathushtra himself, and Jamaspa, the premier of King Vishtaspa offered various sacrifices in Airyana Vaejah.[4]

King Haosravah is said to have welded the loose congeries of Aryan tribes into one nation.[5] Mithra, the patron angel of the pastoral people, we are told, gives a good dwelling to the Aryans,[6] and from his exalted place of residence on the highest summits of mountains keeps ward and watch over the abodes of the Aryans.[7] The Fravashis of the righteous make the streams and rivers to flow and the trees to grow in such a manner that the Aryan countries may prosper.[8] The rising of the rain star is eagerly desired for the fertility of the Aryan countries.[9] Tishtrya and Verethraghna are propitiated by sacrifices, that they might extend their protection to the Aryans and drive out the hostile hordes and diseases and plagues from the Aryan lands.[10] Victory for Aryan arms is the fervent prayer of chiefs and nobles.[11]

**Physical characteristics of the people.** Fair skins and a fairly tall build are some of the conspicuous characteristics of the ancient Iranian physique. The epithets most commonly applied to designate the fairness and symmetry of bodily form

[1] Yt. 1. 21.
[2] Yt. 5. 17, 18.
[3] Ys. 9. 14.
[4] Yt. 5. 49, 69; 9. 25; 17. 45, 46.
[5] Yt. 5. 49; 9. 21; 15. 32; 17. 41.
[6] Yt. 10. 4.
[7] Yt. 10. 13.
[8] Yt. 13. 10, 43, 44.
[9] Yt. 8. 9, 36.
[10] Yt. 8. 56, 58, 61; 14. 48, 50, 53.
[11] Yt. 5. 69; 14. 60.

are *srira,* 'beautiful,' and *huraodha,* 'well developed.' A stout and vigorous body and swift movements of the limbs are constantly prayed for.[12] Bodily deformities are much dreaded and a person with such blemishes is held unfit for participation in certain ceremonial functions.[13] To be deprived of the natural use of the various bodily organs is a calamity which befalls a person who has sinned. Mithra, for example, deprives a person who lies unto him, of the strength of the arms, and the swiftness of the feet, and takes away the sight from his eyes, and the hearing from his ears.[14] Haoma is implored to administer a curse upon the enemies of his votaries by depriving them of the strength of their hands and feet and the sight of their eyes.[15]

Tall and strong, swift-moving and high-footed, wide-breasted, and wide-thighed, of long arms and strong legs, of bright eyes and quick ears, is the masculine form praised in the sacred texts.[16] Laymen either cropped their hair short or shaved the head.[17] The priests, it seems, generally wore their hair long and either arranged it in curls, or coiled it under the turban. The idealized picture of Zarathushtra shows the hair hanging down in ringlets on both sides of his head. Similarly, the priests always grew heavy beards, but the laity went with shaved face or trimmed beard.

Beauty in woman is praised.[18] Among women those with white skins receive preference over those of the olive colour. Chisti, the female impersonation of wisdom, is white in complexion,[19] and Ardvi Sura has white arms.[20] Thick arms, tallness, beautiful form, lovely neck, full breasts, thin waist, long fingers, bright eyes, and sharp ears are admired in woman.[21] Women braided the long tresses of their hair and covered them with cloth, as it was not considered proper for them to go bareheaded.

[12] Ys. 9. 17, 19; 57. 26; 68 11; Yt. 10. 11; 13. 134; 14. 29, 31; 16. 7, 10, 13, 17.
[13] Yt. 5. 93.
[14] Yt. 10. 23.
[15] Ys. 9. 28, 29.
[16] Yt. 8. 12; 9. 17; 10. 88, 104, 108; 13. 134; 14. 17, 29, 31, 33; 15. 54; 16. 7, 10, 13; 17. 16, 22; 23. 2.
[17] Vd. 17. 2, 4.
[18] Vsp. 2. 7.
[19] Yt. 10. 126.
[20] Yt. 5. 7.
[21] Ys. 26. 3; Yt. 5. 7, 15, 64, 78, 126, 127; 13. 107; 17. 11; 22. 9; 24. 56.

## CHAPTER V

## ZARATHUSHTRA

**The prophet.** It came to pass that a holy babe was born in the hallowed abode of Pourushaspa, of the family of the Spitamas. The infant was the wonder of the ages, such a one as Spenta Mainyu or the Holy Spirit had not fashioned since mortal life began. Zarathushtra was his name. Nature's fair bosom trembled, and her heart throbbed with joy at the advent of the divine herald. Joy filled the air and descended upon earth. On every blade of grass and grain of sand was written a word of joy. The clouds floated gloriously in heaven, and the morning dew covered the trees with pearls. The bright rays of the sun danced on the waters of the Dareja, as it swept past the home of the new-born prophet. The flowers shed perfume abroad, and the winds made music in the woods and valleys. The earth sang to the glory of its greatest and best,[1] and the trees with their leafy tongues joined birds and beasts and men in the glad hymn, "Hail, for us is born the Athravan, Spitama Zarathushtra."[2]

The time, as well as the place, of the birth of Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster as he is generally known by the Greek form of his name, are alike unknown. Between 6000 B. C. to 600 B. C., the two extreme dates assigned, the hand of time is moving to fix the period when day broke over Iran with the birth of Zarathushtra. However, a little over 1000 B. C. is the time most probably correct for the advent of this divine herald of Ahura Mazda. Similarly, many cities between the east and the west of Iran claim the honour of being his birthplace, although Eastern Iran was undoubtedly the scene of his prophetic activity.

We have called the civilization of Ancient Iran after the name of the prophet who revolutionized its religious life, and introduced a new social and economic order among its people. It will be proper, therefore, to give an outline of the reforming

[1] Yt. 8. 44. [2] Yt. 13. 93, 94.

activities of the man around whom the Iranian civilization has grown.

The Gathas, or the holy songs of Zarathushtra, give us the actual facts of the life of the prophet as they were. The later Avestan and Pahlavi works transmit to us the account of his career, as it was reflected in the thoughts and ideas of their composers. As we do not intend to give a detailed account of Zarathushtra's life, we shall content ourselves with describing some of its chief events, from the time when he came of age to the day when he breathed his last.

**His discontent with the social and religious order of his times.** Zarathushtra has lived among men and worked among men with his youthful vigour. With growing fondness he has studied human nature in its varied aspects. He has long prayed at the family altar and offered sacrificial libations to the ancestral dead in obedience to his father. He has lived and seen sufficient of society to raise deep thoughts that agitate his mind. Discontent with the existing condition of the world takes hold of his mind and its amelioration is the one idea that he nurses in his mind. He delights to retreat within himself and ponder over the problems of life.

In moments of cheerfulness, Zarathushtra thinks that life is sweet, and man is athirst for life. Every one loves to be long in this world, and consequently a long life is man's constant prayer. There is no joy greater than the joy of living. But sorrow steals over his soul, when he sees that to the many who plod their weary way from birth to death, life is all thorns. The world has kindly souls who mingle their own tears with the tears of the sorrowing, but it has, also, those who are unmoved, when they see bitter tears streaming from the eyes of the suffering; those whose ears are deaf to the woeful sighs of the destitute and down-trodden quailing under their misfortunes; those whose minds are callous to the sufferings of the sick, and whose hearts melt not when the weary burn in the agony of despair, or stumble on the dreary path of life. The tree of life is blooming, but the worm is at the root. Man stretches his hand for the fruit, and finds the canker at its heart. The future prophet gives deep thought to this dark side of life. We may gather his own view of the world, which he has come to reform, from his hymns. He speaks his mind through the spirit of the world which, prior

to his birth, is made to complain in bewailing tones before her creator that the earth is filled with wrong. Iniquity and violence carry all before them, and man feels that he was flung on a heedless world, a plaything for some hideous power.[3] Ahura Mazda would have man walk in the path of righteousness, for it is the one path that brings man near to his creator.[4] But some hidden power for wickedness, it seems, has decoyed man by his beguiling voice to his den of wrong and iniquity. Just as the captive cows, that have been led astray by highwaymen while returning at evening's close from the pasture, low piteously for their calves, and pray for a deliverer who shall lead them back to their stalls;[5] even so the Spirit of the Earth voices the sorrow of its heart, and beseeches Ahura Mazda to send a shepherd to gather the waylaid flock into the fold of righteousness, and restore it to the abode of the godhead. Zarathushtra is chosen by Ahura Mazda for the great task of achieving the hope of mankind, removing the clouds of sin that hide the creator from the sight of men, and weaning their hearts from wickedness.[6]

**Prophetic preparations.** Zarathushtra is athirst for divine wisdom which is the only object of his quest. His one prayer is to hear the message of Mazda from his very mouth.[7] Long does he seek, amid sweet silence, to commune with the godhead, to lift the veil of secrecy, and delve in the mysteries of being. For this purpose he leaves the company of man, and the busy world of noise and hustle, and repairs to the solitude of the mountains unfrequented by men, yet swarming with exuberant life, and there makes himself an abode. At early dawn, while the world is still asleep, the seeker after truth is seen strolling down the silent path whitened by the soft silvery sheen of the queen of night. At the foot of the mountain washed by the meandering waters of the stream, Zarathushtra spends the hour of the dawn in the stillness, scanning the blue vault of heaven and watching the stars that patrol the sky, and meditating deeply. Humanity is still slumbering, regardless of the rousing cry of the cock Parodarsh, but the birds have left their nests to begin their day's work. They have come to the stream to bathe and to drink. Fishes sport themselves in water and ducks are rock-

[3] Ys. 29. 1.
[4] Ys. 72. 11.
[5] Yt. 10. 38.
[6] Ys. 28. 4.
[7] Ys. 28. 11.

ing smoothly on the waves. The breeze wafts the sweet perfume of the flowers all around. The fragrance of the wild rose woos the nightingale into love, and he mingles his melody with her sweet perfume. In this sanctuary of nature the prophet lifts up his heart to heaven, and pours out his spirit before Ahura Mazda, who fills all space. He makes unto him songs of devotion to the murmuring music of the gently flowing waters, the carols of birds, and the whisperings of the winds moving through the thick foliage. Thus he prays, and, praying implores that Ahura Mazda should take him to himself, to meet one little moment and speak to him by the word of his mouth about the mystery of life.[8] The earth now drops the silvery robe which she had donned at night, and the high mountain is soon crested with the light of the swift-horsed Hvarekhshaeta. But Zarathushtra is still there lost in deep thought, letting his soul fly on the wings of pious contemplation and storing inspiring thoughts that come to him in a flash. With a yearning which is never stilled he thirsts for the vision divine, and communion with the All-Holy. When the longing for Ahura Mazda possesses him completely and the divine spark hiding in his heart is fanned into flame; his mind is enlightened, his soul is on fire, and he begins to see more and more of Ahura Mazda within him and without him. Nature, he realizes, throbs with the message of Mazda, which his divine hand has written on plants and trees, on pebbles and sands, on rainbows and dewdrops, in gentle shades on the fleecy clouds that descend upon the lofty summits of the hills, after their wanderings above, and in glorious colours of luxuriant nature. The blessed one devoutly embraces the earthly manifestation of the divine, and touches the fringe of the resplendent raiment of the creator, of whom the whole creation breathes. Long has Zarathushtra now lived in solitude, seeking to fathom the secret of existence. He has solved the great problems of life; the truth has dawned on him. On him now dwells the sweet smile of Ahura Mazda, whose message of hope he is ready to deliver to mankind. Possessed of wisdom and the knowledge of truth, so long the objects of his quest, he now turns his steps towards his father's house.

**Hardships and triumph.** It is painful to be at variance with one's own kinsmen over religious beliefs, and Zarathushtra soon

[8] Ys. 28. 11.

rouses suspicion and alarm among his kinsmen by his utterances. They join his opponents in denouncing the holy one as a rebel against their ancestral faith. Driven out from home and deserted by friends, with rulers and people for his opponents, without means and without support, the prophet is seen wending his weary way alone.[9] While his wealthy fellow-tribesmen are revelling in superfluous riches and feasting to satiety, the greatest of the Iranians lacks the barest necessities of life. With anguish rending his heart, and sorrow weighing upon his soul, he battles with privation and sufferings, and labours in far lands to persuade men and women to hear his message. Footsore with his wanderings, exhausted and broken under the fatigues of the day, he walks the silent streets in search of some hovel, or the shade of a hospitable tree, to repose when the night throws her dark mantle over the earth. When dawn breaks again on the heights of Haraberezaiti, and the lofty mountain glows with beauty in the light of the rising sun, whose rays gild the dewdrops, forsaken Zarathushtra treads with weary steps a wayside path leading to some village, praying all the way for a better reception. With clarion voice he begins to chant the holy songs to attract the people, when he reaches the outskirts of the village. The barking of the shepherd dogs disturbs the peace of the village, the farmers leave their ploughs, and the rustic women with their children hasten to the scene. A little while and they have heard enough. The elders of the village gravely shake their heads, and declare the newcomer a sorcerer whose very look, they aver, would wither their crops, and dry up the milk in their cattle and plague them with diseases. They demand that he leave the place at once. The women begin to curse him loudly, and the village urchins, emboldened by their example, pelt him with stones, and do not rest until they have seen the stranger beyond the borders of their village.

Thus, with keen sense of indignities, and humiliation rankling in his mind, and with none to lighten his sufferings upon earth, he lifts his spirit to Ahura Mazda, unburdening himself of his afflictions before him, and beseeching him to grant the support which one friend gives to another.[10]

The soothing gleam of joy now dawns on his sorrowful hours.

[9] Ys 46. 1, 2.
[10] Ys. 46. 2.

It sweeps away his depression, stills his doubts, and lightens the heaviness of his spirit. The prophet's prayer is heard. He finds his first convert from among his relatives,[11] but still the people will not hear him. Zarathushtra now plans to win favour of the highest of the land. If King Vishtaspa and his royal consort could be won over to embrace his faith, his message would spread rapidly. But it is not easy to gain entrance to the royal court. Kingly majesty always courts exclusiveness. The gates of the royal palace are zealously guarded, and the lord of the land receives none but the great. Although, after his death Zarathushtra comes to be regarded in Iran as the greatest of mortals,[12] even as the star Tishtrya is above all stars in brightness,[13] but the people of Iran are not yet aware of his sublime pre-eminence. He is poor and a stranger, with none to recommend his name to the royal ear. It is only the portals of the abode of Ahura Mazda that are open to all comers. The poorest can approach the King of Kings, and the lowliest can kiss the robe of Divine Majesty. Not so with the human king. The crowd must linger by the wayside and hail its sovereign liege, when the royal pageant passes. The herald of Ahura lingered and waited, until on one auspicious day he found himself ushered into the royal presence. The charming personality of Zarathushtra, the sweetness of his character and the words of wisdom, such as human ears had not heard before, most favourably impressed the king and queen and the courtiers. The royal personages and the court forsook the religion of their fathers for the faith of the prophet, and he was now honoured and greeted by a daily increasing number of followers. But the growing success of Zarathushtra is not viewed with pleasure by all. There are hypocrite priests, fattening themselves by preying upon the credulity of the ignorant, and wicked chiefs, revelling in their iniquity, who view the popularity of the prophet with alarm. It makes them writhe with jealousy, and, with falsehood upon their lips, they conspire to encompass the fall of the holy one, when he thinks his troubles are sleeping, never to reawaken. Ultimately they succeeded, by means of cunning tactics, slander, and guile in having Zarathushtra imprisoned on a charge of sorcery. The misfortune that can wring tears from the eyes of any man

[11] Zsp. 23. 1.
[12] Dd. 72. 8.
[13] Yt. 8. 44.

is now his lot. But the solitude of the prison has no terror for him, and he utters not a sigh, nor does he weep aside. He knows that he is not alone, for Ahura Mazda now dwells with him and he is strong in Ahura Mazda. Although given up by his misguided countrymen, and with a host of enemies against him, he feels that with Mazda for him there is none against him. He and his God have now met, all his fears have fled, a thousand woes cannot weaken his faith in Ahura on whose bosom he now rests peacefully. The prophet steps out once again from the dungeon cell to carry on his religious propaganda.

**The end.** For many years does Zarathushtra travel far and wide to explain the divine message that Mazda has given him. He stirs all Iran, and his name rings through distant lands. Eager crowds hasten to the spot where the holy one turns his steps, to sit at his feet and hear him teach his new doctrines. For well nigh fifty years, that is, until his dying day, the Iranian prophet labours thus for the promulgation of the new faith. He gathers around him a large company of devoted disciples and loving adherents. But he has also provoked bitter antagonism, and his enemies have never ceased conspiring against him with frantic zeal. They have long sought to take his life, but have failed in their attempts. Now, when the prophet is past seventy-seven, and the weight of years has bent his body, a person of ill-renown succeeds in stealthily entering the sanctuary in which he is singing praises unto Ahura Mazda, and stabs him to death.[14] The eyes close in everlasting sleep, the holy heart ceases to beat, and the righteous soul of the blessed one at last wings its flight toward Garonmana; leaving his mortal remains, Ahura Mazda alone knows where, to repose on the bare earth.

[14] Dd. 72. 8; Sd. 9. 5; Dk., vol. 9, pp. 617, 618; cf. ShN. 5. 92, 93.

## CHAPTER VI

## ZOROASTRIAN VIEW OF LIFE

**Zarathushtra finds the meeting ground of the divine and human in the heart of man.** The religious beliefs of the Kianian people, before the coming of Zarathushtra, were mostly inherited from the Pishdadians. However, they postulated a far greater number of good and evil powers in control of nature's forces; and, as reflective intelligence increased, began to invest them with moral, or spiritual, as well as physical, significances. Thus light came to be regarded as the physical correspondent of truth, and darkness, of falsehood. Consequently, the angel of light had the twofold duty of combating darkness and error. Also, in the process of deifying the forces of nature, man was led to personify his own good and evil qualities. Every virtue was fostered by some particular angel, or good genius, and every vice, by some evil demon. The two were in incessant conflict, and man lived his life between the combatants. He had as many masters to serve as he had enemies to fight, and, although his efforts in combating the evil hosts was lightened by the help received from his unseen protectors, he was bound to propitiate them constantly with sacrificial offerings and elaborate rituals. His intercourse with his heavenly masters was most formal. Divine and human were immeasurable distances apart.

These pre-Zoroastrian divinities had the outer world for their abode. Man had to search for them in the heavens and upon the earth, on the waters or in the trees. Zarathushtra taught him to dive deep into his own inner nature to greet the divine. The prophet proclaimed one supreme God whom man could address with the warmth of his heart as person to person, or as friend to friend. Ahura Mazda is the name of this incomparable and matchless being.

**Ethical dualism of Zarathushtra.** According to the teachings of the prophet, there are two primeval powers, the one good and the other evil, who work, the one for truth and righteous-

ness, the other, for falsehood and wickedness.[1] The battle-ground upon which these primal forces of good and evil, right-eousness and wickedness wage their wars is the inner world of man. Human life is a storm. The din of the storm that rages in the breast of man is louder than the howling of any tempest upon earth. Happy is the man who outlives the storm. Zara-thushtra, therefore, lays down precepts to guide man's impulses and motives from within and declares that inner purity is the best thing in life.[2] All right-speaking and right-doing originate from right-thinking, and this, in turn, springs from a pure mind. Purity of mind is the best of riches, and Vohu Manah, 'Good Mind,' the first among the heavenly beings created by Mazda, is its supreme expression. Every Zoroastrian prayer begins and ends with the fervent vow of the faithful soul that he will adhere to good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; and abjure evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds. Every one must shoulder his own load, and never can he cast it upon another.

Man must always exercise his freedom of will, and choose for himself between the two primeval spirits of good and evil.[3] The will of the Good Spirit is righteousness, and righteousness is all in all for man. Mortal life is secure on the rock of righteous-ness. Wickedness is the very being of the Evil Spirit, and wicked-ness is his will. Ever does he dog man's steps, and, rearing his head, calls his tempting wares to lure him. Woe unto him who in his weakness is caught in the snare, and bends his knees before the arch-tempter. The enemy of man is strong, but even stronger is Ahura Mazda. If man flees unto him and seeks his protec-tion, Ahura will strengthen him to fight against evil, and guide him in the path of righteousness. To fight temptation, and con-quer it in his own person, is man's first formidable task. Man has voluntarily chosen to be comrade in arms with the author of goodness, to combat the author of evil upon earth as a personal enemy. He is enjoined not to await Angra Mainyu's aggression, before taking arms for self-defence against him. To be ever on the offensive against evil is the best defence against it. It is evident that 'be good,' and 'eschew evil,' the universal moral precepts of the great religions and ethical systems of the world would be too passive for such a combative view of life. There-fore, to 'do good,' and to 'resist evil,' are the active and militant

[1] Ys. 30. 4, 5; 45. 2. [2] Ys. 48. 5. [3] Ys. 30. 2, 3.

formulas which Zarathushtra propounds for man's acceptance. Evil is not to be requited with good, but with retributive justice. War against evil, according to his teachings, is an ethical necessity. Non-resistance to evil is wrong; it is immoral, irreligious.

Ahura Mazda has destined man to the high honour of being his co-worker for the furtherance of goodness, and his fellow-soldier in the war against the forces of evil. Humanity is in arms for the cause of goodness. This warfare is as old as man, and will go on uninterruptedly until, at last, mankind will inflict a crushing defeat upon the forces of evil, and bind the Sovereign of Evil himself to impotence. Truth will ultimately gain over falsehood, goodness will be all-pervading, and evil will vanish. The world will be morally perfect, for imperfections will pass away. The Kingdom of Wickedness will be swept out of existence, and the Kingdom of Righteousness will be established by man throughout the universe.

**All life as a struggle is the dominant note of Zoroastrianism.** Alongside the ethical dualism preached by the prophet in the Gathas, his successors develop a thoroughgoing system of cosmic dualism. Thus dualism in all spheres of life remains the salient feature of religious thought in Iran. The Good Spirit works for cohesion and construction, the Evil Spirit, for disintegration and destruction. The two resultant forces are ever at war, each with the other. They have known no rest since the beginning of time. Rest is unthinkable, for it would reduce all existence to nothingness. This combative view of life is Zarathushtra's contribution to religious thought and practice.

Earthly as well as heavenly life results from this perpetual warfare. Animal life and vegetable life are possible only through it, and even human life persists solely because of this eternal law of polarity. For example, it is due to the constant activity of two opposing forces that the earth is kept revolving in its yearly orbit around the sun. Thus it is prevented, on the one hand, from falling away from the life-giving sun, and fleeing away into dark and lifeless space, and, on the other hand, is checked from becoming inordinately enamoured of the sun, and plunging into his fiery bosom. Similarly, man's physical body is the scene of an incessant struggle to maintain life, and avoid every tendency to dissolution. Every exercise of vital function and every muscular movement necessarily involves waste of cells

and tissues, which so long as life and health continue, is quickly and effectually restored. So soon, however, as the restoring power of the system becomes less than the waste, the result is disease, the first warning of death's approach. To live, therefore, is to struggle. Life is at its highest intensity when the struggle is fiercest, because, then, all vital activities are greatest; waste is incessant, and restoration is constant. When the struggle ceases, life is done.

This eternal law of struggle works not only in the physical sphere, but extends also to the social and moral life of man. Neither does it end with man. Warfare between the forces of good and evil is prevalent as much in the celestial world as in the terrestrial.

Angra Mainyu is abroad and manifests himself in the world through physical, social, and moral imperfections. The world which man inhabits is full of imperfections. The perfect world is yet to come, and it is to be made by man. Every small triumph over physical forces, every single reform in social life, and every step in the moral advancement of man is the weakening of Angra Mainyu's hold upon the world, and a sure move toward the perfection that is to come.

**Physical imperfections.** The world, we have seen, is in flux. There is no rest or peace, all is movement and strife. The source of this strife is not the passive inertia of the dead mass of matter, but the active opposition of a living power, that wills evil and sets limitations to earthly existence from headaches to earthquakes. At the beginning of creation Ahura Mazda extended his creative hand to check and control the primitive lawlessness of nature in order to build a cosmic universe. Angra Mainyu, who is lawlessness itself, contested with the creator to thwart his purpose. After being long in travail, owing to this struggle, the primitive chaos generated the universe which, although marvellously good, is full of imperfections. Through scorching heat and freezing cold, drought and famine, arid wastes and barren deserts, hail-storms and hurricanes, earthquakes and cyclones, deadly marshes and malarial swamps, plagues and diseases, Angra Mainyu, according to the later Avesta, labours to make man's life upon earth uncomfortable. 'May destruction and death seize his children,' is the curse of the Evil Spirit against Ahura Mazda's creation. Many millions of years has life required to

mount from mole to man. Life has abandoned types without number before it has reached its bloom. To overcome the rigours of unkind nature, to remove the physical disabilities, to wrest from nature her secrets, and utilize her forces for man's needs, to wage war against diseases, and learn to be immune from contagions; to fight untimely death himself, who walks with muffled feet, seeking to uproot the budding and blooming life, and to make the world more habitable—this is to do Ahura Mazda's work of combating Angra Mainyu on the physical plane. Man has needed the æons of time to learn the art of harnessing nature. As knowledge grows and science progresses, man triumphs over nature's lawlessness. Humanity will thus co-operate with the godhead to push the cosmic evolution to perfection, and will ultimately bind Angra Mainyu, the embodiment of imperfection in hell-fastness.

**Social imperfections.** The primitive state of man was barbarism and Angra Mainyu, the arch-barbarian, desires that mankind shall ever remain in the state of savagery. Ahura Mazda, however, has instilled in man a burning passion for civilization and progress, the impulse to improve his lot upon earth. Mashya and Mashyoi, the very first human pair, laid the foundation of civilization when they first met together and made a crude beginning of manufacturing clothing of herbage, to cover their naked bodies.[4] Their children have carried along their work of civilization and advancement. Civilization, according to the teachings of Zarathushtra, is religion applied to the social life of man. The prophet sanctifies man's twofold civic duty of working for the advancement of civilization, and of fighting against the forces of barbarism. He preaches the life of hard labour, strenuous work, and diligent industry. The body is the citadel of the soul. Man can work with a sound and vigorous body. Hence bodily health is the chief coveted boon. The man who has inured himself against fatigue, and who labours in his field or workshop from morning to evening, furthers goodness, and weakens the power of evil. Action, progress, and reform are the watchwards of the prophet's social teachings. This world is real and of paramount importance. Man's primary interest is centred in this world. He may desire the reward and recompense from his creator in the world to come, but the attainment of his wishes in the world

[4] Bd. 15. 10.

of spirits depends absolutely upon his work in the world of mankind and the work for mankind.

Man is a social being who craves association with his fellowmen, ever desiring to live and work with others of his kind in this unknown land, where he finds himself in strange and bewildering surroundings. When Mashya took Mashyoi to wife, and broke his own solitude, he formed the first human alliance. This social bond of relationship has since been growing into the various groups known as family, clan, tribe, and nation, and will be ever developing into larger and wider combinations. Angra Mainyu introduces discord and disruption, strife and war, to break up the social structure, and to keep men ever divided, so that the progress of civilization may be stopped or retarded. The opposing forces of union and disunion are always at war with one another, and the former are slowly, but steadily, overcoming the disintegrating powers. Long ago, man overcame the primitive social chaos, and has been struggling ever since, amid convulsions, wars, and the irruptions of baser passions, for social solidarity and the spread of civilization in the four corners of the world. Nor will he rest until, in the dim future, nations unite with nations, and races with races, in real community of interests, and humanity offers an unbroken front to the Arch-Barbarian, and drives him away from the transformed world.

**Cheerful optimism characterizes Zoroastrianism.** Two facts stand out prominently from this brief statement of the Zoroastrian view of man's life on earth. The one is that this world is not an illusion, but a tremendous reality, involving the primary duty that man work for its betterment. The second is that man was set in the centre of this imperfect world, to serve as its perfecter and redeemer. Every individual knows that he has a part to play in this great scheme. This at once emphasizes man's excellence in the scale of earthly existence. Lifelong effort to perfect an imperfect world gives man unfailing joy, which he would miss, if placed in an already perfect world. The imperfections of the finite world do not discourage him, for he knows for certain that they will be overcome and removed through his instrumentality. Suffering, it is true, darkens all mortal life. It is useless to ignore this fact, nor is it wise to brood over it in vain sentimentality. It is not heroic to lift one's soul in agony to Ahura Mazda, and implore him to wipe away

human tears. Man of his own accord has rallied to the banner of the King of Righteousness, and is fighting the enemy, with God and his fellow-men as his comrades. Consequently, both duty and honour impart the strong impulse to fight and conquer, and inspire him to endure all hardships cheerfully and bravely, and be ever ready to lay down his life for the mighty cause, as the soldier that he is. By constant struggle and effort to overcome imperfections, man is enabled to touch the depths of his own life, and gather the fullest strength of his being. Zarathushtra gives a new zest to life, and prepares man to take a cheerful view of its affairs. This optimistic trait was conspicuous in the racial character of early Zoroastrians. Life to them was worth living, and a long and happy life became the constant burden of their prayers. It is evident that ascetic practices would not appeal to such a people, and it is no wonder that monastic life, with its exaltation of celibacy, mendicancy, and mortification, never found a congenial soil in Zoroastrian Persia. As struggle is the basic principle of religion, man's whole attention is devoted to preparing himself for the warfare. In such a system of thought, courage, manliness, self-improvement, diligence, justice, and truthfulness would naturally become primary virtues; whereas humility, forgiveness, and mercy would receive secondary importance.

## CHAPTER VII

## AVESTAN LITERATURE

**Name of the language and literature of Ancient Iran.** The reign of the Kianian king, Vishtaspa, is memorable in Iranian annals for the advent of Zarathushtra. The sacred literature produced by the efforts of the prophet and his disciples, as well as the language of this literature, are generally designated Avesta or Zend-Avesta. The word Avesta, however, does not occur in these earliest Iranian texts, but is found first in the Pahlavi. We have no means of ascertaining the name which Zarathushtra and his contemporaries gave to these holy writings, nor yet the name of the language in which they wrote and conversed. The word Avesta is interpreted in various ways, and there is no definite agreement among the scholars. It is probable that it is derived from the verbal stem *vid*, 'to know,' and, consequently, that it signifies 'knowledge' or 'wisdom.'

The Pahlavi language, in which the word Avesta is found, came into existence in Iran after the extinction of the Avestan tongue as a vernacular. It designates the original Zoroastrian texts as Avastāk, Avistāk, or Avastāk u Zand. The Pahlavi word *Zand* has for its original Avestan *Āzainti* which means explanation. Hence, the expression Avastāk u Zand is generally taken to represent the original Avestan texts, together with the commentary upon them, in Pahlavi. The term *Zand* need not be restricted exclusively to denote the Pahlavi commentary, but may also refer to the short commentaries, in the Avestan language itself upon the difficult Avestan texts. Such explanatory Avestan glosses are found interspersed in the extant Avestan texts. The word *āzainti* first occurs in the texts of Ys. 57. 8, 20, which belongs to a date of composition not very far from that of the Gathas, and certainly refers to the Avestan commentary.

At a later period the expression Zend-Avesta becomes more popular among the Zoroastrians of Persia and India, both as the name of the Zoroastrian scriptures and their language. The Per-

sian Rivayats (1478-1766), and other Persian, as well as later Gujarati works, freely use it with this twofold meaning. Hyde (1700) first introduced the term in Europe, and Anquetil (1771) continued this erroneous usage of the collocation Zend-Avesta. Only during recent years, with the advancement of Iranian learning in Europe, the language and literature of Ancient Iran have come to be known by their correct designation Avesta. In like manner, the Parsi scholars are now gradually spreading the information regarding the proper use of the term among their co-religionists, though the erroneous use of the word Zend still obtains among a very considerable portion of the community, and the expressions Zend alphabet and Zend language are still heard.

**The place of the Avestan language in the Indo-European group of languages.** The Iranians and the Indians, in their primitive home, spoke two dialects of one original language. There is a closer affinity between Avesta, the sacred language of Ancient Iran, and Sanskrit, the holy tongue of Ancient India, than between any other two dialects of the great Indo-European family. This resemblance is so great that, with careful observance of certain phonetic laws, whole lines and stanzas may be converted, word for word, from the one language into the other. Apart from certain distinctive idioms, the grammar and syntax of both languages are closely similar. Avesta is the sister language of Sanskrit. It is the oldest language known of the earliest historic period of Persia, and was the parent of the modern languages and dialects spoken in Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan. Through its daughter tongue, the modern Persian, it has enriched the vernaculars of India. The word paradise comes from the Avestan *pairi daeza,* and a few other words found in the vocabulary of the English language can be traced in their origin to this ancient language of Persia.[1]

**Avestan alphabet.** The earliest written documents of Iran which contained the compositions of Zarathushtra and his contemporaries, perished, as we shall see shortly, in their original in the 3rd century B.C. There are no traces left to show us the particular script used by the prophet in recording these ancient texts. The Avestan texts known to us are written in characters derived from Pahlavi, the language which came in vogue in Iran about fifteen hundred years after Zoroaster. The writing in the

[1] Cf. Jackson, *Persia Past and Present,* pp. 29, 30, New York, 1906.

extant texts is read from right to left, and represents a Semitic alphabet. The Aramaic alphabet already occupied a prominent position, as early as 800 B.C., among the Semitic alphabets that were well known throughout the northwestern borders of Iran. It cannot be said, how early this Semitic script began to be used in Zoroastrian Persia, but we can say from the Avestan texts that have come down to us that they are written in a script which may be classed as some derived type of the old Aramaic alphabet. The Avestan alphabet contains about fifty different signs.

**The extent of Avestan literature.** Zoroastrian tradition speaks of the original Avestan canon as consisting of twenty-one Nasks, or books corresponding to the twenty-one words of Ahuna Vairya, the most sacred Zoroastrian prayer. The Pahlavi Dinkard gives a list of the contents of these original holy books, and West estimates on the strength of these informing contents that the twenty-one volumes must have contained about 345,700 words of written texts.[2] This traditional statement about the extensiveness of the original Zoroastrian canon is supported by the writings of the foreign writers. Pliny the Elder informs us that Zoroaster composed 2,000,000 verses.[3] The Arab historians Tabari and Masudi state that the Zoroastrian works were copied out on 12,000 cowhides.[4]

Two archetype copies of these sacred texts, we are told, were prepared at the command of King Vishtaspa, and deposited in the libraries at Dizh-i Nipisht and Ganj-i Shapigan.[5] At the end of the Achaemenian Empire, when Persia lay prostrate before Alexander, one of these copies perished in the flames when the conqueror burned the royal palace at Persepolis.[6] Tradition maintains that the other copy was taken by the conquering hosts to their own country, and later rendered into Greek.[7]

The long centuries of the Seleucid and Parthian rule, following the collapse of the Persian Empire is a blank period in the literary history of the country. The last of the Arsacids favoured the collection of the scattered texts, but the real work of

[2] West, SBE. vol. 37, Introd. p. 45.
[3] HN. xxx. 1. 2.
[4] Annales, i. 675; Masudi, ed. Barbier de Meynard, ii. 123.
[5] Dk., vol. 9, p. 577.
[6] Diodorus, 17. 72; Curtius, 5. 7; Dk., vol. 9, p. 569.
[7] Dk., vol. 9, p. 569.

restoring them was zealously and systematically undertaken by the Sasanians.

The original twenty-one Nasks, as separate books, were long since lost. A considerable portion of the contents of these works was probably used from very early times for ritual purposes. The texts, in this case, were not recited in the order given in the Nasks, but were specially arranged according to the liturgical requirements. Some of the complete Nasks, and the selected portions of others, were interwoven with one another for this purpose. The sacred texts must have been recited by heart in this order by the officiating priests from very ancient times, and being transmitted in the hereditary priesthood from generation to generation, were thus perpetuated. This oral transmission of the liturgical and ritual texts has greatly helped in the restoration of the lost Nasks. The texts, compiled and edited by the learned Sasanian high priests, were formally declared by the royal decree authoritative and final.

This canonical compilation once again suffered heavily in the seventh century, when Zoroastrian Persia fell dead at the feet of the conquering hordes of Arabia. Thirteen long centuries have elapsed since the extinction of the last Zoroastrian Empire and the ravages of fire, sword, and time have reduced the great bulk of the sacred texts of Zoroaster to the fragmentary and scanty remains in which the Avestan texts have reached us. The entire collection of the extant Avestan texts, according to Geldner, consists of about 83,000 words,[8] and preserve materials, in full or in part, to the extent of about two-thirds of the original Zoroastrian canon of twenty-one books.

**Avestan manuscripts.** The work of copying manuscripts was zealously carried on throughout the dark days of Zoroastrianism. The Persian scribes maintained their superiority in penmanship over their Indian co-religionists, just as the learned among them had preserved a closer acquaintance with religious tradition than the Zoroastrian high priests of India. But the general state of affairs grew more unsettled in Persia as time passed, until during the last few centuries the condition of the Zoroastrian community became so precarious that the work of the scribes, as well as that of the preservation of the precious

[8] Geldner in *Avesta, Pahlavi, and Ancient Iranian Studies*, p. 30, Strassburg, 1904.

manuscripts, became extremely difficult. It is not surprising, under such circumstances, that the oldest extant Avestan manuscript copied in Persia is not of an earlier date than the seventeenth century.

The Indian colony of the Zoroastrian settlers was more fortunate in this respect than that of the persecuted followers of Zoroaster in his place of birth. From time to time, various manuscripts crossed the Persian Gulf or the Afghan frontiers into India, and the Parsi scribes kept themselves busy making copies of these originals. Comparative security in their land of adoption and their growing prosperity, enabled the Indian Zoroastrians to preserve intact this literary treasure of their ancient faith. The oldest Avestan manuscript, copied in India and preserved to this day, is at least four centuries older than its Iranian counterpart, and dates from the thirteenth century. This oldest surviving manuscript is thus over two thousand years later in date than its author.

India and Persia hitherto divided the possession of all Avestan manuscripts between them. Europe entered into competition for the ownership of these sacred documents about the beginning of the eighteenth century, and America has recently established her claim to these relics of the sacred literature of the Orient by securing some unique manuscripts for the Columbia University of New York. The oldest Avestan manuscript, already referred to, now rests on the shelves of the Bodleian library at Oxford, and the university library of Copenhagen has the distinction of possessing the best collection of the Avestan manuscripts in the world. India can boast of a fairly large collection of the Avestan manuscripts; but Persia, the original home of the written Word of its prophet is practically barren of the manuscript material.

**The nature of Avestan literature.** The Avesta is above all a religious literature. Both prose and poetical compositions record theological, doctrinal, devotional, and ritual utterances of the prophet and his disciples. It was the sacred character of these texts that tended in a great measure to the preservation of even a portion of the original holy writ. The Avestan language had a fairly long lease of life in Kianian Iran, and it is natural that there should be a considerable secular literature also. Tradition alludes to the existence of a vast literature of this class. We are informed by the author of the Dinkard that the

Sasanian king Shapur I ordered a collection of the Avestan texts upon secular subjects, such as medicine, astronomy, geography, minerals, and other arts and sciences, that had found their way in a scattered condition to India, Greece, and other countries.[9] Naturally enough this secular literature could not be guarded as zealously as the indispensable theological texts, and, consequently, it perished in convulsions that followed the downfall of the empire.

Firdausi immortalizes the kings and heroes of this period in his famous work based upon the materials handed down by tradition. The early bards who were contemporary with these popular heroes or who flourished in subsequent generations, must have recounted the tales of their prowess in the Avestan tongue and celebrated their praises in odes sung in every Iranian house. Not a line of this interesting literature has reached us.

Though no consecutive works which deal exclusively with the secular subjects have reached us, we meet, interspersed in the extant Avestan texts, stray passages and fragmentary chapters which treat of various branches of secular knowledge. These provide us with useful information about the social and economic life of the Avestan people.

**Avestan poetry.** The Gathas, the oldest part of the Avestan literature in existence, are in verse, and embody the memorable utterances of the prophet himself. It was generally known that the Gathas were metrical compositions, but the fact that a considerable portion of Yasna, Yasht, and Vendidad was also in metre was long since forgotten. Geldner first discovered this important fact, and acquainted the scholarly world with the presence of verses scattered throughout the prose texts.[10] The Avestan poetry generally consists of octosyllabic metre. It does not observe rhyme, and is not particular about the quantity of syllables. The five Gathas, composed in five different metrical forms, represent the best poetry of the Avestan literature, whereas the later compositions show a decline in the art of versification.

**Specimens of Avestan literature.** We shall give here a free rendering of some important passages of Avestan prose and poetry, which will acquaint us with their value as literary compositions.

[9] Dk., vol. 9, p. 578.
[10] See Geldner, *Uber die Metrik des Jungeren Avesta,* Tubingen, 1877.

'The early Iranian settlers were harassed by the hostile neighbours and nomadic tribes that surrounded them. These hardy mountaineers that roved over the rugged mountains frequently emerged from their native fastnesses, in search of food for themselves and fodder for their cattle, and repeatedly overran Iranian settlements, carrying away crops and cattle reared by the industry and toil of the Iranian peasantry. The spirit of the animate world sends forth a cry to heaven and besecches Ahura Mazda to send a deliverer who would relieve the earth of the burden of human wrongs under which the earth was groaning:—

'Unto you wailed the soul of the Kine. "For what did you create me, who made me?
Over me are violence and rapine, oppression and terror and force.
None other than you is my husbandman, vouchsafe then unto me the blessings of pasture."'

Ys. 29. 1.

The birth of Zarathushtra sends a thrill of joy throughout the good creation, and the poet describes it in the following lines.

'In whose birth and in whose growth
Rejoiced waters and plants,
In whose birth and in whose growth
Increased waters and plants,
In whose birth and in whose growth
Cried out "hail!"
All the creatures of the Holy One.
"Hail!" born for us is the priest,
Spitama Zarathushtra.'

Yt. 13. 93, 94.

Zarathushtra's birth confounds the Evil Spirit and his wicked brood.

'At whose birth and at whose growth
Rushed away Angra Mainyu
From this earth which is wide,
Round, whose ends lie afar.
Thus he howled, the evil-knowing
Angra Mainyu, the all-deadly,
"Not did all the angels together
Drive me out against my will,
But Zarathushtra alone
Overpowered me in spite of myself.
He smites me with the holy Word, a weapon like a stone as big as a house; he burns me with Best Righteousness, as if with molten metal, so does he make it that it were better if I quitted this earth;
He alone who forces me to quit
Who is Spitama Zarathushtra."'

Yt. 17. 19, 20.

Deserted by his friends and harassed by his enemies, Zarathushtra turns to his heavenly friend for help and speaks:—

'To what land shall I turn, whither shall I go?
Forsaken by kinsmen and nobles I am;
Neither do people like me,
Nor so the wicked rulers of the land.
How then, shall I please Thee, Mazda Ahura?
This I know, Mazda, wherefore I fail
Few are my flocks, and few my followers.
In grief I cry to Thee, Ahura, behold it.
Help me even as friend unto friend,
Show me through righteousness the riches of Good Mind.'
Ys. 46. 1, 2.

Zarathushtra exhorts his hearers to use their freedom of will and intelligently choose for themselves their faith.

'Hear ye the best with your ears, with discernment ponder over them,
For choice of faith, each man for himself deciding
For the great concern at hand.'
Ys. 30. 2.

The prophet preaches his philosophy of the two Primeval Spirits:—

'Now shall I speak of the world's Primal Spirits twain
Of whom the Holier thus addressed the Evil:
"Neither our thoughts, nor teachings, nor understandings,
Nor wills, nor words, nor deeds,
Nor selves, nor souls do agree."'
Ys. 45. 2.

'These Primal Spirits who revealed themselves as twain
Are in thought and word and deed, a better and a bad.
The wise one between the two chose aright, not so the unwise.
And then these two Spirits created as first they met together
Life and non-life, as also at the last it shall be
Worst Existence to the wicked, Best Mind unto the righteous.'
Ys. 30. 3, 4.

Ashi, the impersonation of rectitude welcomes the prophet as under:—

'Then thus spoke she,
The good and great Ashi,
"Come nearer unto me
Thou true and righteous Spitama
Lean thou against my chariot."

'Near unto her came
Spitama Zarathushtra,
He leaned against her chariot.
And then she caressed him from above

With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left
With words she addressed him thus:
"Beautiful art thou, Zarathushtra.
Well-shapen art thou, Spitama;
Strong thy legs, long thy arms,
Glory to thy body is given
Long happiness to thy soul
Even as I have spoken to thee."'

Yt. 17. 21, 22.

Zarathushtra explains the sanctity of wedded life on the occasion of the solemnizing of the marriage of his youngest daughter.

'Him, O Pouruchista, thou of the family of Haechataspa
And Spitama, youngest of Zarathushtra's daughters,
Has he chosen thy husband who is devoted to Good Mind, Righteousness and Mazda;
Counsel then with thy wisdom and do with good intent the holiest deeds of devotion.
Unto maidens marrying I speak words
Of monitions and unto you, lay them to heart,
Wise with precepts strive for the life of Good Mind,
Seek to excel one another in Righteousness, for that one's shall be the joy.'

Ys. 53. 3, 5.

Zarathushtra holds out reward and retribution to those who do the will of Ahura Mazda and those that revolt from it.

'Unto him who does his will, gives better than the good
He, Ahura Mazda, in his kingdom; unto him worse than evil
Who serves him not, at the last end of life.'

Ys. 51. 6.

Vishtaspa, the patron king, succours the religion brought by Zarathushtra:—

'Who became the arm and support
Of this religion
Which is of Ahura and Zarathushtra.
Who found her progress arrested
And rescued her from the wicked,
He gave her a central place,
High ruling and never faltering, holy,
Possessing in plenty, cattle and fodder,
Blessed with plenty of cattle and fodder.'

Yt. 13. 99, 100.

Stray passages that inspire devotion:—

'So Zarathushtra gives as an offering even the life of his body,
And the excellence of Good Thought unto Mazda,
As also willing obedience and power of deeds and words unto righteousness.'

Ys. 33. 14.

'Through good mind and through rectitude and through the deeds and words of wisdom we come near unto Thee

'We pay homage unto Thee and we acknowledge ourselves Thy debtors, O Mazda Ahura! With all good thoughts and with all good words and with all good deeds we come near unto Thee.'

Ys. 36. 4, 5.

'As then, Ahura Mazda has thought and spoken, decreed and done what is good, so do we give unto Thee, praise Thee, and worship Thee. Thus do we pay homage unto Thee and acknowledge ourselves Thy debtors, O Mazda Ahura!'

Ys. 13. 5.

'Grant, O Mazda, for this world and the spiritual, that we may attain to fellowship with Thee and righteousness for all time.'

Ys. 40. 2

'Unto Thy good kingdom, Mazda Ahura, may we attain for ever. In both the worlds, O Most Wise One among beings, art Thou the good king of us, men and women.

'We dedicate ourselves unto Thee, of good renown, the adorable one, the possessor of truth; therefore, O Most Wise among beings in both the worlds, be Thou unto us our life and body.

'May we deserve and obtain, O Mazda Ahura, life-long joy in Thee. May we love Thee and lean upon Thee for strength. O Most Wise One among beings, cheer us and make us happy for long time.'

Ys. 41. 2-4.

'Through righteousness, the best, and righteousness, the fairest, may we see Thee and may we come near Thee and may we attain to Thy perfect friendship, O Ahura Mazda'

Ys. 60. 12.

Zarathushtra addresses the spirit of wisdom:—

'Up rise from thy seat, come out from thy abode, O most upright and holy Wisdom, created by Mazda If thou art before me, stop for me; if behind, then overtake me.'

Yt. 16. 2.

A call to the faithful to be up and doing:—

'Up with your feet and up with your hands
Keep your minds in readiness,

ye Mazda-worshipping Zoroastrians, to do lawful and timely good deeds, and for the undoing of unlawful and untimely deeds. Now practise good industry and help the helpless.'

Vsp. 15. 1.

The following lines written in praise of agriculture show that a diligent person who ploughs and hoes and harrows his field, sows the seed and cultivates corn, reaps the harvest and works from morning to evening in the waving fields of grain, furthers Ahura Mazda's Kingdom of Righteousness.

'Unhappy indeed is the land that for long
Lies unploughed by a ploughman
And in need of a good ploughman,
Even as a beautiful maiden
Who long goes childless
And in need of a good husband.

'Who so tills the earth, Spitama Zarathushtra!
With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left
Unto him she brings forth plenty
just as a loving husband lying on a bed with his beloved wife, she brings forth a son or fruit.

'Who so tills this earth, Spitama Zarathushtra!
With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left,
Then unto him says this earth, "O man!
Thou who dost till me
With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left,
Here indeed upon thy country I shall bestow,
Here indeed I shall come laden with fruit
Bringing all kinds of food
Besides a profusion of corn."

'Whoso does not till this earth, Spitama Zarathushtra!
With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left,
Then unto him says this earth, "O man!
Thou who dost not till me
With the left arm and the right
With the right arm and the left,
Verily shalt thou stand
Leaning at the door of the stranger
Among those that beg for food;
The refuse indeed for thee
Will they bring of food
Those who have profusion of good things."

'Creator of the material world, thou righteous one! What is the increase of the Mazda-worshipping religion?' Then replied Ahura Mazda: 'Much tilling of corn, O Spitama Zarathushtra!' Whoso cultivates corn, cultivates righteousness; he furthers the Mazda-worshipping religion as well as with a hundred feet, he suckles the Mazda-worshipping religion with a thousand breasts, and strengthens it with ten thousand sacrifices.

'When corn grows, then the demons start in dismay; when the sprouts are out, the demons cough; when the stalks are seen, the demons weep; when the ears are out, then the demons flee; in that house where the corn is made into flour the demons are smitten
It seems as if is turned
Red hot iron in their jaws
When corn is stored in plenty.
'Then let this holy saying be recited.
'"None of those who do not eat are able to practise great works of righteousness, to do much work of husbandry, to beget many children. By eating indeed every material creature lives, by not eating it perishes."'
Vd. 3. 24-33.

Blessings upon the ruling king:—

'I invoke upon the king, the lord of the country, the blessing of supreme courage, supreme victory, supreme sovereignty, stability of his kingdom, long rule of the kingdom, a long life to live with the strength of the body.

'I invoke upon him the blessing of courage well-formed and well-developed, victory given by Ahura, overpowering supremacy, entire subjugation of the tyrants, smiting of the enemies, overthrowing of the adversaries, and the hostile tyrants.

'I invoke upon him the blessing that he may be a victor in his struggle with all hostile tyrants, all evil oppressors, evil thinkers, evil speakers, and evil doers.

'May he be a victor through good thoughts and good words and good deeds May he be a smiter of all enemies, of all demon-worshippers. May he attain to good reward, and to good renown, and to long happiness of the soul.

'I invoke the blessing—"Mayst thou live long, and mayst thou live a happy life for the help of the righteous ones and for the distress of the evil-doers.

May the Best World of the righteous
The shining, the all-happy, be thine,
So may it be as I invoke blessing."'

AfrG. 14-18.

The following verses give a picture of the house of a person who is favoured by Ashi, the genius of fortune.

'Ashi, thou good, and Ashi, thou fair, and Ashi, thou brilliant
With joy and radiant with shining rays,
Ashi, thou giver of good glory
Unto those men whom thou dost follow.
With perfumes smells the house
In which Ashi, the good,
Puts her auspicious feet
With peaceful mind for long friendship
Those men rule kingdoms, rich in food,
Provided with sweet-scented meals,
Where the beds are spread
And other coveted riches
Unto whom thou good Ashi dost follow.
Happy indeed the man whom thou dost follow,
Then do thou follow me
Thou possessed of manifold boons and courageous.
Their houses are well laid out
Rich in cattle they stand
In the forefront and long-lasting.
Their beds stand
Well-spread and well-adorned
Well-shaped and provided with cushions
With feet inlaid with gold.
Their loving wives waiting
Sit on the beds
That are fine and provided with cushions
Elegantly attired and adorned with bracelets,
With hanging ear-rings
Four-cornered and a golden necklace.

"When will our house-lords come? When shall we have loving joy in our body?"

'Their maidens sit
Adorned with anklets, they of thin waist,
Beautiful of body, long their fingers,
Of such beauty in form
As those who see them can wish.
. . . . . .

'Their horses are awe-inspiring,
Swift and loud neighing,
Swiftly they draw their chariots,
They are harnessed in fine leather,
They bear thy gallant invoker,
Possessed of swift horses, high chariots,
A sharp spear, a long spear
And swift arrows, hitting his mark,
Overtaking his adversary from behind,
Smiting his foe from the front.
. . . . . .

'Their camels are awe-inspiring,
Of large hump and great intelligence,
Flying upon the ground, fighting with great fire.
. . . . . .

'They have silver and gold
Brought to them in hoards by envoys
From the distant lands
And garments of splendid make.
Unto whom thou good Ashi dost follow.
Happy indeed the man whom thou dost follow,
Then do thou follow me
Thou possessed of manifold boon and courageous.'

Yt. 17. 6-14.

Every Iranian youth aspired to share in the management of the communal affairs and the following lines depict the parents praying for such public-spirited sons.

'(Give me) native offspring that give support,
Ruling over the region, belonging to the assembly,
thoroughly developed, possessed of good works, delivering from distress, of good intellect, that may further my house, village, town, country, and the renown of the country.'

Ny. 5. 11.

According to the Avestan writers the Kara fish, the stallion, and the vulture possess the most powerful eyesight among living beings.

'Verethraghna gives unto Zarathushtra the eyesight of the Kara fish, that lives beneath the waters, in the Rangha with ends lying far, and depths a thousand times the height of a man, and who can measure a ripple no thicker than a hair . . . the eyesight of the stallion, that in the dark of the dreary and cloudy night can see a horse's hair lying on the ground and can make out whether it is from the head or the tail . . . the eyesight of the vulture with a golden collar, that from a distance of nine districts can see a piece of flesh no thicker than the fist, just as much in brightness as a needle, even as the point of a needle.'

Yt. 14. 29, 31, 33.

Moral wrongs grieve Ashi, the guardian of chastity, and she laments:—

'What shall I do with them?
Shall I go forth to the heaven?
Shall I sink into the earth?'
. . . .
'Then replied Ahura Mazda:
"Thou fair and wise Ashi,
Go not forth to the heavens,
Sink not into the earth,
But walk thou in the
Interior of my abode, holy
And fair and kingly"'

Yt. 17, 59, 60.

Chastity is the highest virtue and the courtesan, who is a scourge to the world of morality, is condemned thus:—

'Her look dries up a third of the mighty flowing waters, O Zarathushtra; her look takes away a third of the growth of the blooming, beautiful, green-coloured trees, O Zarathushtra

'Her look takes away a third of the verdure of the bountiful earth; her touch takes away a third of the courage, victory and truthfulness of a righteous person of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, O Zarathushtra.

'Therefore I say unto thee, O Spitama Zarathushtra, that such a one is more deserving of death than gliding snakes, or than howling wolves, or than the prowling she-wolf that falls upon the fold, or than the she-frog that rushes into the water with her thousandfold brood.'

Vd. 18 63-65.

The following lines describe a righteous soul's heavenward journey after death:—

'At the close of the third night, when the dawn breaks, the soul of the righteous person passes through the trees inhaling sweet fragrances; it seems as if a wind were blowing from the region of the south, from the regions of the south, of sweet fragrance, of sweeter fragrance than other winds.

'And it seems to the soul of the righteous person as if it were inhaling that wind with the nose, and it thinks. "Whence does that wind blow, the wind of the sweetest fragrance that I ever inhaled with my nostrils?"

'It seems to him as if his own conscience were advancing to him with that wind in the shape of a maiden, fair, bright, of white arms, courageous, beautiful, tall, with prominent breasts, beautiful of body, noble, of glorious birth, of fifteen years, and of a form as fair as the fairest of creatures.

'Then the soul of the righteous person addressed her, asking: "What maiden art thou, the fairest of maidens whom I have ever seen?"

'Then replied upto him his own conscience: "O thou youth of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, and of good conscience, everybody loved thee for the greatness, goodness, beauty, sweet fragrance, courage, innocence, in which thou dost appear to me.

"Thou didst love me, O youth of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, and good conscience, for the greatness, goodness, beauty, sweet fragrance, courage, innocence, in which I appear to thee.

"When thou didst see others practising heresy and idolatry, causing harm and working destruction to plants; then thou wouldst sit chanting the holy songs, sacrificing unto the good waters and the fire of Ahura Mazda, and causing joy to the righteous coming from near and far.

"Lovely as I was thou madest me more lovely, beautiful as I was thou madest me more beautiful, favoured as I was thou madest me more favoured, seated as I was on an exalted place, thou madest me sit on a more exalted place, through thy good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and so men will hereafter sacrifice unto me who have long sacrificed unto and have been in communion with Ahura Mazda."

'The first step that the soul of the righteous person made, placed him in the Good Thought paradise, the second step that the soul of the righteous person made, placed him in the Good Word paradise, the third step that the soul of the righteous person made, placed him in the Good Deed paradise, the fourth step that the soul of the righteous person made, placed him in the Endless Lights.'

Yt. 22. 7-15.

The condition of the world, that will be at the time of the Renovation is described as under:—

'That the world they may renovate
Never aging and never dying
Never decaying and never rotting
Ever living and ever growing and master at its will.
When the dead will rise
Life and immortality will come
The world will be renovated at its will.'

Yt. 19. 11.

In the following verses the poet speaks of the unequalled prosperity that the Iranian countries enjoyed in the golden age of King Yima and ends with the description of the fall of the glorious king.

'In whose kingdom they ate
Both food and drink unfailing,
Flocks and men were undying,
Waters and plants were undrying.
In whose reign neither cold
Nor hot wind did blow,
Neither was there old age nor death
Nor jealousy demon-made
Before he lied.
Before the time that he,
In words of falsehood and untruth
Began to take delight.
But when in words of falsehood and untruth
He took delight,
The Glory from before his sight
Fled away in the shape of a bird.
When he saw the Glory vanish,
He, the good shepherd Yima Khshaeta
In sorrow did Yima wander
In terror of his enemy
Laid him low on the ground.'

Yt. 19. 32-34.

Thus boasted Snavidhka:—

'"Child I am still, not of full age,
If ever to full age I grow,
I will make the earth a wheel,
I will make the heaven a chariot.
I will bring the Good Spirit down
From the shining Paradise,
I will drag out the Evil Spirit
From the stinking Hell.
They shall draw my chariot
Both Good and the Evil Spirits
If the manly-minded Keresaspa would not kill me." But the manly-minded Keresaspa did kill him
With an end to his life
With destruction of his being.'

Yt. 19. 43, 44.

King Takhma Urupi, the Demon-Binder, subjugates the Evil Spirit and uses him as his charger:—

'And he rode Angra Mainyu
Turned into the body of a horse
For thirty years
From one end of the earth to the other.'

Yt. 19. 29.

Speaking about the hero Keresaspa who, mistaking the back of a dragon for a piece of land, prepared to cook his food upon it, the poet says:—

'Who killed the horny dragon,
The horse-swallowing and men-swallowing,
Full of poison, green of colour,
Over whom had poison flowed
As thick as a thumb and green,
On whose back did Keresaspa
Cook his meal in an iron pot
At the time of noon.
Scorched, he, the deadly hissed
And rushed from under the iron pot
And upset the boiling water.
Affrighted rushed headlong
The manly-minded Keresaspa.'

Ys. 9. 11.

In the hymn of praise dedicated to Ardvi Sura, the female genius of fertility, the composer describes her form and garments in the following words:—

'Beautiful indeed are her arms
And white, stronger than a horse,
Beautiful and lovely, she is well-adorned,
Of a lovely maiden's form,
Very courageous, well-developed,

Girded high, tall in form,
Of glorious lineage, nobly born,
Wearing shoes of ankle-height
Golden-hued and bright.
Donning the golden mouth-covering
Stands she, the good
Ardvi Sura Anahita;
Clad in fine garment
All embroidered in gold
Adorned with ear-rings
Of four corners and gold,
She of noble lineage wears a necklace,
Ardvi Sura Anahita
Around her lovely neck.
Tightly has she girded her waist
That well-shaped may be her breasts
That pleasing may be her breasts.
Upon her head she wears a crown
Ardvi Sura Anahita,
With a hundred stars and golden,
Eight its sides, of a chariot's design
With beautiful fillets,
Good in size and fair of make.
Clad in beaver garments, is
Ardvi Sura Anahita,
Of three hundred beavers.'

Yt 5. 7, 64, 78, 123, 126-129.

The onward flow of the waters of Ardvi Sura is described as under:—

'The great far-famed,
Who is as much in greatness
As all these waters
That run along on this earth.
Who, the strong one, flows forth
From the height Hukairya
To the Sea Vourukasha.
All the shores around the Sea Vourukasha
Are in commotion,
The whole middle is bubbling up
When she flows forth unto them,
Ardvi Sura Anahita
To whom belong a thousand lakes
To whom a thousand outlets;
Any one of these lakes
And any of these outlets
(Is) a forty days' ride
For a man mounted on a good horse
And the outflow of this
One water of mine penetrates
unto all the seven zones. And (the outflow) of this one water of mine
Flows continuously
Both summer and winter.'

Ny. 4. 4-6.

In the Litany to the moon we have:—

'How does the moon wax? How does the moon wane? Fifteen days does the moon wax. Fifteen days does the moon wane. As long as is her

waxing, so long the waning. So long is the waning, even as the waxing. Who is it through whom the moon waxes and wanes other than Thee?'

Ny. 3. 4.

The demons of disease and death feast and revel at the dead of night. But when the earth is bathed in the morning by the light of the radiant sun, and the air is vitalized by the light, the demons, that is, the germs, perish.

'When the sun rises up, purification comes upon the earth made by Ahura, purification unto the flowing waters, purification unto the waters of the wells, purification unto the water of the seas, purification unto the water that is standing. Purification comes unto the righteous creation, which is of the Holy Spirit.

'If indeed the sun were not to rise, then the demons would kill all things that are in the seven regions.'

Ny. 1. 12, 13.

The daily prayer of the faithful that the fire on the hearth may never be extinguished, is worded thus:

'Mayest thou burn in this house, mayest thou ever burn in this house, mayest thou be blazing in this house, mayest thou be increasing in this house,

Even throughout the long time
Until the mighty Renovation,
even unto the mighty, good Renovation'

Ny. 5. 9.

Large tracts of Ancient Iran being destitute of water, people eagerly prayed for the coming of the seasonal rains. The production of the rain was chiefly in the hands of Tishtrya, and his advent was consequently hailed as saving the country from the threatening scourge of drought. When the sun warmed the waters of Vourukasha, the water ascended in the form of vapour to the atmospheric region, the clouds charged with water swam in the atmosphere until Tishtrya made them unload their burden on the parched land. Apaosha, the demon of drought, we gather from the texts, strives to capture the waters and a struggle ensues between him and the rain star. Tishtrya is defeated in the first encounter and cries out in distress. In the second battle, however, he overcomes his adversary and exultingly announces his victory to the good creation and assures it that now there will be abundant rains and a luxuriant verdure will soon clothe the land. The struggle is thus described:

'They grasp each other by arms, O Spitama Zarathushtra! Tishtrya, the radiant and glorious and the demon Apaosha. For three days and

three nights they fight together, O Spitama Zarathushtra! And the demon Apaosha proves superior, overpowers and vanquishes the radiant, glorious Tishtrya.

Then from there he flees
From the sea Vourukasha
To a Hathra's distance
In woe and distress he cries out
The radiant and glorious Tishtrya.
"Woe to me, Ahura Mazda!
I am undone, ye waters and plants!
Lost is my fortune, O Mazda-worshipping religion."'

In his second encounter with Apaosha, Tishtrya triumphs over him.

'"Hail," cried he,
The radiant and glorious Tishtrya,
"Hail unto me, Ahura Mazda,
Hail, ye waters and plants,
Hail, O Mazda-worshipping religion,
Hail be unto you, ye countries,
Onward for you the water-streams
Will unhindered flow
To the corn of the large seeds,
To the grass of the small seeds,
And to the material world"'

Yt. 8. 22, 23, 29.

In the deep silence of the night, broken by occasional yelping of dogs, the angel Sraosha keeps watch over the sleeping country, and goes his round of inspection in a chariot drawn by four steeds. The text describes these horses.

'Whom four horses
White, shining, beautiful,
Holy, intelligent, and shadowless
Carry through the heavenly region.
Of horn their hoofs
Shod with gold.
'Swifter they than horses, swifter than the wind, swifter than the rain, swifter than the clouds, swifter than the winged birds, swifter than a well-darted arrow.
All these they overtake.
Those who follow them from behind
Do not overtake them from behind.
Who together with two weapons
Drive forward carrying
The good, holy Sraosha
Reaching the Indus on the east
Striking far in the west.'

Ys. 57. 27-29.

Among the tamed beasts of burden used in Iran, the camel was the chief means of transport and was also used for riding.

The following verses vividly describe his qualifications and his form.

'In the shape of a camel, burden-bearing,
Docile and dashing,
Strong and swift of steps,
Supplying hairy garments to man.
Who of all males in rut
Possesses the greatest strength
And the greatest vigour
When he goes to his females.
Indeed those females are best protected
Whom protects the burden-bearing camel

of strong forelegs, stout hump, hairy eyes, shaking head, imposing, tall and courageous.

'Whose far reaching glance
Reaches far even
In the dark of the night.
Who throws white foam
Along his mouth,
Of good knees and good feet
Who stands looking round
As an all-powerful ruler.'

Yt. 14. 11-13.

The poet vividly describes the flight of Vareghna, the swiftest among birds, in the following manner:

'In the shape of the bird Vareghna,
Soaring from below,
Pouncing from above,
Who among birds is the swiftest,
Lightest of them that fly.
He alone among the living
Equals an arrow's flight
However well it has been darted
Who lustily flies up
At the first break of dawn
Wishing the night to be no more,
Wishing the morn to be ever more,
Skimming over the heights of the hills,
Skimming over the tops of the mountains,
Skimming over the depths of the valleys,
Skimming over the summits of the trees,
Listening to the songs of the birds.

Yt. 14. 19-21.

**Similes, metaphors, and other notable characteristics.** Zoroastrianism is declared to be the best of all religions, and the author uses four similes to exemplify the excellence of the faith. Just as the sea Vourukasha, we are told, is greater than other waters, or as a great stream flows swifter than a small rivulet, or as a great tree overshadows small plants, or again, as the heavens encircle the earth; so is the religion of Zarathush-

tra greater than all other religions.[11] This excellent faith cleanses man from evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds, just as a powerful wind cleanses a plain.[12] The sacred spells destroy evil thoughts of man as completely as fire devours the fragrant wood.[13] The mind of a courtesan is as wavering as a cloud driven by the wind.[14] The star Tishtrya's flight is likened unto the arrow darted by Erekhsha, the swiftest archer of Iran.[15] The wicked fiend flees always like a well-darted arrow at the recital of the holy hymns.[16] The sun rises from behind the great mountain Hara Berezaiti, and covers it over with light, similarly can a righteous person confound Angra Mainyu with holy prayers and rise above his will.[17] Sraosha's company is sought by the faithful that he may protect them even as the shepherd dog guards cattle.[18] The demons tremble before the soul of a righteous dead person as a sheep on which a wolf is pouncing.[19] As a man shakes with fear when he sees a weapon or an arrow or a lance or a stone from a sling aimed at him; so does fire tremble in front of boiling water, lest it may boil over and extinguish it.[20] The soul of a person who has ill-treated dogs upon earth goes to the next world howling more loudly than a sheep does before a wolf.[21] Offering libations to waters after sunset is equivalent to throwing them downright into the jaws of a venomous snake.[22] A wicked person carries harm everywhere during life, but when dead he is as impotent of defilement and harm as a frog that has been dead more than a year and whose venom is dried up.[23] Men cook their meals and eat food; even so do the demons feed in the burial places.[24] Zarathushtra caused the demons who roamed about the earth in human form to sink beneath the earth.[25] Angra Mainyu says that Zarathushtra smites him with the holy spell Ahuna Vairya, which seems to him as big a stone as a house and that the prophet burns him with righteousness which the Evil Spirit feels as if burning with molten brass.[26] It is sin to allow Ahura Mazda's gifts to run to waste and unnecessary waste of a thing, we

[11] Vd. 5. 22-25.
[12] Vd. 3. 42; 8. 30.
[13] Ys. 71. 8.
[14] Ys. 9. 32.
[15] Yt. 8. 6, 37.
[16] Vd. 9. 46.
[17] Yt. 10. 118.
[18] Yt. 11. 7.
[19] Yt. 24. 27; Vd. 19. 33; Aog. 19.
[20] TdFr. 32-35.
[21] Vd. 13. 8.
[22] Nr., bk. 2. 7. 4.
[23] Vd. 5. 35, 36.
[24] Vd. 7. 57.
[25] Ys. 9. 15.
[26] Yt. 17. 20.

are informed, of even as small a quantity as a thread that a maid would let fall while spinning, is wrong.[27]

The man who recites the names of Ahura Mazda, as also the man who sacrifices unto the Guardian Spirits, is protected from harm in such a way as a thousand men may watch over one man.[28] Tishtrya keeps the fairy Duzhyairya in bonds with such a force as a thousand strong men would use in keeping one man in chain.[29] In speaking of the superiority of Mithra's wisdom to man's, it is affirmed that if man's wisdom were a hundred times greater it would not rise to the level of Mithra's wisdom, and it is further said that if man's ears were a hundred times better he would not hear so well as Mithra.[30] Should the evil thoughts, words, and deeds of man be a hundred times worse, they would not rise so high as the good thoughts, words, and deeds of Mithra.[31] One lying unto Mithra causes as much harm as a hundred wicked persons together would.[32] It grieves the sun, moon, and the stars to shine upon a man defiled by the dead.[33]

The voice of the wailing of a poor man who is wronged, as well as Haoma's voice in the sacrificial prayers offered to Ahura Mazda, is said to reach up to the sky above and spread over all the seven zones below.[34] The Fravashis come to the help of man with the good blessings of rectitude, as wide as the earth, as long as the rivers, and as high as the sun.[35]

Mithra takes away from the liars the strength of their arms, the swiftness of their feet, the eyesight from their eyes, and the hearing from their ears.[36] A devout prayer confounds the eyesight, hearing, speech, intellect, hands, and feet of the wicked.[37] The two eyes of an evil-wisher cannot look, nor can his mouth open for harm, in presence of any one who has devoutly recited Ahuna Vairya.[38] Verethraghna binds the hands and feet of the liars, and takes the seeing and hearing away from their eyes and ears.[39] Azhi Dahaka's fervent prayer is that he may make all the seven zones of the earth empty of men.[40]

Two-footed being is the expression used to designate man,[41]

[27] Vd. 5. 60-62.
[28] Yt. 1. 19; 13. 71.
[29] Yt. 8. 55.
[30] Yt. 10. 107.
[31] Yt. 10. 106.
[32] Yt. 10. 2.
[33] Vd. 9. 41.
[34] Yt. 10. 85, 89.
[35] Ys. 60. 4; Yt. 13. 32.
[36] Yt. 10. 23, 63.
[37] Yt. 11. 2
[38] Yt. 11. 4-6.
[39] Yt 14. 63.
[40] Yt. 5. 29, 30; 15. 19, 20.
[41] Yt. 11. 17, 22; Vd. 5. 35, 36, 38; 15. 19.

and Zarathushtra is the chief of this two-footed race.[42] While rising up and sitting down, while sitting down and rising up are the inverted clauses used to denote at all times.[43] To drive back sickness to sickness and death to death signifies their removal.[44] Zarathushtra is the anti-fiend to the fiend.[45] The swiftness of the horse is likened to the movements of the sun, and he is usually called the swift-horsed sun. The moon, on the other hand, is allotted the semblance of the bull, and is generally called possessed of the seed of the bull.

References are found in the texts to the use of riddles. Yoishta, a pious man, sacrifices unto Ardvi Sura to enable him to answer the riddles propounded by the sorcerer Akhtya.[46] Similarly, Aka Manah challenges Zarathushtra with riddles.[47]

The antithesis between good and evil is emphasized by the use of distinctive words for the organs, speech, and actions of the heavenly beings and righteous persons on the one hand and the infernal crew and the wicked persons on the other. A member of the good creation, whether celestial or terrestrial, has a head and a belly, he lives in a house and eats and speaks and walks, whereas the inmate of the evil creation has a skull and a gut and he lives in a burrow and devours and howls and rushes. The Avestan vocabulary is thus interspersed with opposite linguistic expressions to designate the two opposite worlds of good and evil.[48]

**Maxims.** One alone is the path of righteousness, all other paths are no paths.[49] He is not heroic who is not heroic in righteousness, he is not valiant who is not valiant in righteousness.[50] Wicked is he who is good to the wicked, righteous is he who is friend to the righteous.[51] Next to life, the second best good for man is purity.[52] He is a thief of duty, who fails

[42] Yt. 13. 41.
[43] Yt. 1 17
[44] Vd. 20. 1, 2.
[45] Vd. 19. 46.
[46] Yt. 5. 81, 82.
[47] Vd. 19. 4.
[48] See Frachtenberg, *Etymological Studies in Ormazdian and Ahrimanian words in the Avesta* in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, pp. 269-289, Bombay, 1908.
[49] Ys. 72. 11.
[50] TdFr. 103, 104.
[51] Ys. 46. 6.
[52] Ys. 48. 5; Vd. 5. 21.

in his obligations to others.[53] Happiness unto him from whom is happiness to any one.[54] He gains nothing, who gains not his soul.[55] "None shall pity him who is pitiless to himself.[56] He gives a tongue to the wolf, who teaches the holy spells to the wicked.[57]

[53] Vd. 4. 1.
[54] Ys. 43. 1.
[55] Chithrem Buyât 3.
[56] Aog. 49.
[57] TdFr. 3; Aerpt. bk. 1. 8. 9.

## CHAPTER VIII

## KIANIAN SOCIETY

**Society divided on racial basis.** The Iranians of this period still called themselves Aryans, and grouped all peoples not of their race under the comprehensive designation non-Aryan. They were surrounded in their new settlements by many non-Aryan aboriginal tribes which proved a constant source of menace to them. These marauding idlers swooped down from the deserts to despoil the fertile fields tilled by the industry of the Iranian peasantry, and to drive away their cattle. The Avestan texts are unsparing in their denunciation of these hostile non-Aryan races, and assert that their lands are among the creations of Angra Mainyu.[1] These enemies of the Aryans sought their destruction but were always baffled in their evil intent.[2] With the exception of a few families that were friendly to Zarathushtra,[3] the Turanians of the north were the most hostile to the Aryans and their wicked king, Franrasyan, strove three times in vain to capture the Aryan Glory of the Kianians.[4] The Aryan Glory, on the contrary, routed and extinguished all non-Aryan peoples.[5] The north remained a source of perpetual menace to the Iranians. Hence it is not surprising that the northern regions are called in the Avestan texts the abode of Angra Mainyu and his infernal crew.[6]

**Society divided on religious basis.** In addition to their generic name, Aryan, the people of Iran now came to be known after the names of their national God and of their prophet. Zarathushtra had introduced them to the worship of one supreme God, Ahura Mazda, and the people now adopted, as their communal designation, the name, Mazdayasna, or the worshipper of Mazda. The names Mazdayasna Zarathushtri, or the Mazda-worshipping Zoroastrian, and Zarathushtri, or Zoroastrian, were other specific

[1] Vd. 1. 18.
[2] Yt. 5. 58, 59.
[3] Ys. 46. 12.
[4] Yt. 19. 57, 60, 62-64
[5] Yt 18. 2; 19. 68.
[6] Vd. 7. 2; 19. 1.

designations of the Iranian community. The followers of Zarathushtra who had received the message of Mazda formed a class by themselves, and all those outside their religious fold were called Daevayasna, or worshippers of demons. Differences in religion established separation between the two groups A gathering of the worshippers of Mazda was called an *hanjamana* or *vyākhman*, 'an assembly,' but such a meeting of the Daevayasnans was contemptuously termed *han-dvarena*, 'a huddling together.' Every Zoroastrian declared in the Confession of Faith, as is done to this very day, that he was a follower of Ahura Mazda and an abjurer of the demons.[7] Princes and people invoked heavenly aid to rout them [8] The prophet is asked by Ahura Mazda to recite Ahuna Vairya to withstand the opposition of the demon-worshippers.[9] A demon-worshipper was considered impure, his touch defiled sacred objects and his entrance into a place of worship desecrated it. He was to be repulsed from the meeting of the faithful. The life of a Daevayasna was valued at a very low price. The man who desired to qualify himself as a surgeon was asked to prove his skill by making three successful operations on the demon-worshippers, before he was permitted to practise among the Mazda-worshippers.[10] It was not wrong to refuse food to a Daevayasna, although a workman of his class was to be paid for his services.[11] A Mazdayasna teacher was not to give instructions to a Daevayasna, unless he could secure means of livelihood in no other way.[12] It was the pious duty of every Mazdayasna to keep all harm from the Mazdayasnian settlements.[13] Iran hereafter was for the Mazdayasnians, and the God of Iran extended his protection to them alone. Neither the laws of the country, nor the divine laws, extend protection to the demon-worshippers. The Daevayasnians were hated by man; they were cursed by God!

**Society divided on professional basis.** We have already noticed that later tradition credits the divisions of society in Ancient Iran to Yima, who is said to have established the four classes of the priests, warriors, husbandmen, and artisans. The Avestan works, however, do not associate the legendary king's name with the inauguration of these classes. In fact, the extant

[7] Ys. 12. 1.
[8] Yt. 5. 68, 77; 9. 30.
[9] Yt. 11. 6.
[10] Vd. 7. 36-40.
[11] Aerpt. bk. 1. 9. 1, 2.
[12] Aerpt. bk. 1. 8. 5, 6.
[13] Ys. 12. 2, 3.

texts do not enlighten us in any way on the question of their origin. It is expressly said in one instance that there are four distinct *pishtra* or professions, and that they are *āthravan,* 'priest,' *rathaeshtār,* 'warrior,' *vāstrya fshuyant,* 'husbandman,' and *hūiti,* 'artisan.'[14] Though we have abundant material that deals with the work of the artisans of the various classes, such as, the goldsmiths and blacksmiths, masons and carpenters, potters and weavers, the designation *hūiti* representing the artisan class occurs once only in the Avestan literature. The priests, warriors, and husbandmen are the three classes usually mentioned together. Ragha, the ancient city of great renown, is spoken of as the place of three races and the Pahlavi commentators explain that the three orders originated in this famous city.[15]

We shall recur to this fourfold division in subsequent chapters which deal with the various professions and occupations of the early Iranians. Suffice it to note here that the Avesta recognizes the four orders of the priests, warriors, agriculturists, and artisans, corresponding to the four Vedic classes of the priests, warriors, agriculturists, and serfs. It is interesting to note, also, that in India these classes developed into rigid castes, but in Persia, as we shall see later, priesthood alone evolved into a separate caste by itself, whereas the other three orders remained divisive in name only.

**Social polity.** The type of civilization prevailing in Iran in the days of Zarathushtra had already passed beyond the stage that is called 'primitive.' The social development of Ancient Iran, as we may glean from the Avestan works, had already reached a state of high organization, with graded social ranks. The texts refer to the people of the first rank and middle rank.[16] The poor, who naturally formed the bulk of the population, are said to be under the special protection of Sraosha.[17] The Gathas speak of the three main divisions of society, without giving information about their proper significance. These are *xvaetu, airyaman,* and *verezena,* which probably indicate, respectively, the immediate associates and disciples of the prophet, the nobility of the land, and the working classes.[18]

The Younger Avesta constantly speaks of a fourfold division

[14] Ys. 19. 17.
[15] Vd. 1. 16; Phl. Vd. 1. 16.
[16] Yt. 10. 17; Vd. 13. 20, 21.
[17] Ys. 57. 9.
[18] Ys. 32. 1; 33. 3, 4; 46. 1; 49. 7.

of society into *nmāna,* 'family,' *vis,* 'clan,' *zantu,* 'tribe,' and *danghu,* 'community.' The family, as we shall see in the next chapter, was the earliest form of society. Several families united together for protection and help, and formed a clan, with the eldest of the clan, as its chief. This village-master presided over the meetings of the members of his clan, headed the seasonal feasts, and tried at the village tribunal all offenders against clan rules. The constant contacts between such different groups led them to unite into a still larger body, in which we see the formation of a tribe, with its tribal chief who called assemblies, and promulgated decrees for the guidance of his tribesmen. Finally, with the growth of intercourse between these tribes, we find them uniting in the largest aggregate of society, the community or nation. Thus man continued to live his independent life in the respective spheres of the family, clan, or tribe and at the same time shared the larger life of the confederation of these groups, that is, of the community.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE FAMILY

**The Zoroastrian type of the family.** The basis of Iranian society is the family. The word *nmāna* means both 'house' and 'household' or 'family.' Parents, children, and those connected by blood, living under one roof, constitute a family. The picture of the ideal family, such as we may glean from the Avestan texts, is that of a householder living with his wife and children, in a house in which the cattle thrive, the fire grows, virtue increases, welfare arises, and the dog prospers.[1] The cock may be added to these possessions of a happy home, for it is the duty of this domestic bird to wake the members of the family at the dawn.[2]

**The family centres in the hearth.** Every family had its own fire, which was kept burning day and night, and was never to be extinguished. When the family retired at night, the mistress of the house carefully covered the fire with ashes, to preserve it until the morning. Her first act on arising was to ceremoniously wash and cleanse her hands, remove the ashes that protected the fire during the night, and to revive the live coals into a flame with fragrant wood and fuel.

According to the sacred texts, the fire woke up the master of the house at night and sought nourishment from him.[3] When the houselord approached the fire at the early dawn, and fed it with fuel, the fire that burned upon the hearth blessed the houselord with herds of oxen, sons, long life and happiness.[4] The house fire cooked the evening and the morning meals and looked for sacrificial offerings of dry and fragrant fuel from the people of the house.[5]

The Iranians had brought with them the legacy of the reverence for the sacred fire, which, from immemorial times, they had shared, in company with the other members of the Aryan

[1] Vd. 3. 2, 3.
[2] Vd. 18. 23-25, 28, 29.
[3] Vd. 18. 18, 19.
[4] Vd. 18. 26, 27.
[5] Ys. 62. 7; Ny. 5. 13.

stock, in their original habitation. Zarathushtra exalted the holy flame to the most eminent position in his new faith. Fire was now designated the son of Ahura Mazda, and the bright emblem represented, in all Mazdayasnian households, the supreme godhead who is himself all light. The domestic hearth became also the family altar, around which the family gathered for its devotions. With fuel in hand and with ceremonial offerings, the householder prayed that the sacred emblem may be ever burning and ever blazing in his house,[6] and demanded of the fire well-being and sustenance, life and valour, holiness and wisdom, and glorious offspring.[7] The fire of the house, thereupon, blessed him with a flock of cattle, a multitude of men, an active mind, an active spirit, and a happy life.[8] The father made the domestic offerings to the sacred fire, as had his ancestors in their days, and would his descendants also, in their turn, after his death. Of the several days of a year set apart for the commemoration of the dead, one of especial interest is the nineteenth day Fravardin, of the ninth month, named Adar, after the angel of Fire, consecrated to the Guardian Spirits. This close association between invocation of the spirits of the dead and the sacred fire is probably reminiscent of the ancient practice of celebrating the feast of the dead, with particular care, in the month dedicated to fire. The dear ones of a family, who left it at death, had lived their lives around the same fire on the same hearth, before which their surviving relatives gathered to offer the sacrificial repast. Death had taken them away from their earthly abode, but the fire of the house, for which the family fervently invoked everlasting life, was still there, alive in a blazing flame, to perpetuate the undying connection between the living and the dead. Though the ancestral dead were invisible to their living descendants they came down from the heavens on the days sacred to them, entered their former abode, walked around the hearth, partook of the sacrificial feast prepared in their honour, rejoiced in the joys of their descendants, and grieved in their sorrows. During life they were helpers and supporters of their kith, after death they were still their guardians and protectors.

[6] Ys. 62. 3; Ny. 5. 9.
[7] Ys. 62. 4; Ny. 5. 10, 11.
[8] Ys. 62. 10; Ny. 5. 16.

**The family thrives under divine protection.** Some of the heavenly beings act as family divinities, and help the pious families in obtaining the blessings of life and warding off misfortunes. Sraosha, it is said, rears an abode of strength and courage for poor men and women.[9] Far from that house flee all evils wherein he is befriended and beloved.[10] As the genius of truth, Mithra blesses the family of truthful persons with herds of oxen and male offspring.[11] The house in which Ashi, the genius of riches, puts her foot, becomes rich in cattle.[12] The householders implore her to thwart the malice of their evil-wishers.[13] Health and happiness prevail in a house in which Haoma is honoured.[14] He is invoked to thwart the evil purpose of malicious persons.[15] The wicked Druj flees from the house which is shielded by archangels.[16] Sacrifices are offered for the welfare, furtherance, and prosperity of the family and for the removal of want and pain.[17] Reward and recompense of the righteous, prosperity, glory, happiness, and the long predominance of the Zoroastrian religion are piously desired for the house,[18] and benedictions are pronounced at the end of the daily prayers that obedience may rout disobedience, peace may smite strife, charity may dispel miserliness, devotion may triumph over impious thoughts, truth may banish falsehood, and righteousness may drive out wickedness from the house of the faithful.[19]

In addition to the help that the members of the household receive from divine beings, the family turns for protection and succour to the Fravashis, or the Guardian Spirits of the dead. Death does not interrupt the loving intercourse between the living and the dead. The departed ones do not forsake those whom they have left behind, and desire, in turn, that their living kinsfolk will not forget them. Their interest in the welfare of their family has not ceased. Like winged birds they come flying upon earth, visit their former abodes, and long for sacrifices. On this side, the living members of the family, out of filial regard for their dead ancestors, pray for their arrival and extend them a cordial welcome to the house,[20] so that contented they may walk in the house, leave it satisfied and without complaint, and carry back with them to heaven the devotions of the living to Ahura

[9] Ys. 57. 10.
[10] Ys. 57. 14, 34.
[11] Yt. 10. 28.
[12] Yt. 17. 6, 8.
[13] Ys. 52. 2.
[14] Ys. 10. 7.
[15] Ys. 9. 28.
[16] Yt. 2. 11, 12.
[17] Vsp. 11. 13.
[18] Ys. 60. 2, 3.
[19] Ys. 60. 5.
[20] Yt. 13. 147.

Mazda and the archangels.[21] With offerings and sacrifices, prayers and devotions, the family prays for their benedictions,[22] and the propitiated Fravashis bless the household with flocks of cattle and heroes, with horses and chariot.[23]

**Parents.** Gaya Maretan, the primeval man, is the father of the great human family, and all the different races of mankind have sprung from his male descent. Hence the descent of children from the earliest times came to be reckoned in Ancient Iran through the father, who was called *nmāno-paiti,* 'master of the house or family.' His wife who was the sole mistress of the domestic economy of the household was called *nmāno-pathni,* 'mistress of the house.' Primarily, the duty of the father was to protect and support his family.[24] In times of peace he hunted and tilled the fields, felled the trees and worked in various ways, to earn a living. When war came to his gates, he fought for the safety of his kin. The mother managed the household, and with the help of the female members of the family, ground the corn and cooked the food, tended the cattle and milked the cows, spun and wove, sowed the seeds and plucked the weeds, reaped the harvest and winnowed the corn, and, above all, looked after the rearing and early training of the children. Though the mistress of the house superintended the domestic affairs, it is interesting to note that the household fire, in the first part of the night, calls the master of the house, and not his wife, to arise and feed him with clean wood, to keep him from being extinguished.[25] This is because, as the head of the family, the father was also head of the cult of the hearth-fire.

**Children.** The usual Avestan word for a child is *frazainti,* but *aperenāyu,* 'not of full age,' *chithra,* 'progeny,' and *taokhman,* 'seed,' occasionally serve as substitutes.

Ahura Mazda holds the father of a family far above him who is childless.[26] The prophet sanctifies childhood, and every Zoroastrian man and woman prays for a numerous progeny. The creator maintains and develops the infant in the womb of the mother, and preserves it from death.[27] One of the boons asked by maidens from Vayu is that, when wedded, they may be blessed with children.[28] Mithra's benediction upon the family that sacri-

[21] Yt. 13. 156, 157.
[22] Ys. 60. 4.
[23] Yt. 13. 52.
[24] Ys. 11. 1.
[25] Vd. 18. 18, 19.
[26] Vd. 4. 47.
[27] Yt 13. 11, 15, 22
[28] Yt. 15. 40.

fices unto him is that virtuous offspring shall be born to it.[29] The Fravashis, also, are invoked for the bestowal of a virtuous offspring,[30] which they give unto those who lie not unto Mithra.[31] Offspring multiply in a house in which Ashi enters.[32] That illustrious children may never desert the house is the universal family prayer.[33]

To be without children is, according to Zoroastrianism, the greatest calamity that can befall a family. Childlessness is a curse pronounced by some angels upon persons who offend them. Mithra, it is said, deprives the offending person of his child,[34] and the house in which people lie unto this angel of truth remains childless.[35] The mystical plant Haoma curses him who does not ceremoniously prepare him for sacrificial purpose, so that he will live without offspring in this world. The same curse is hurled by cattle against the master who ill treats them, and who does not feed them well.[36]

It is interesting to note the virtues and qualifications that the Iranian parents desired in their children. To be dutiful to their parents, reverential to their elders, and to be diligent workers for the support of the household were not the only characteristics demanded in offspring. The ideal of the child gleaned from the Avestan texts is of one well-developed in body and mind, who will one day sit in the assembly of the people, dominate over all in the region, who will liberate the distressed, promote the welfare of the house, village, town, and country, and further the renown of his country.[37]

Among the Kianian people, children were reared with great affection.[38] They were fondled and supported until the age of seven years,[39] when they were considered fit to receive education.

In their longings for children, we find that the early Iranians undoubtedly valued sons more than daughters.[40] A son, in the

[29] Yt. 10. 108.
[30] Yt. 13. 134.
[31] Yt. 10. 3.
[32] Yt. 18. 4, 5.
[33] Ys. 60. 7.
[34] Yt. 10. 110.
[35] Yt. 10. 38.
[36] Ys. 11. 1, 3.
[37] Ys. 60. 7; 62. 5; 65. 11; 68. 5, 11; Yt. 13. 16, 134; 19. 75; Ny. 5. 11.
[38] Ys. 10. 8.
[39] Vd. 15. 45.
[40] Yt. 24. 3; Vd. 3. 33; Dk. vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 9, p. 20.

first place, was a permanent economic asset for the maintenance of the household. He lived with his aged parents all his life, whereas a daughter renounced the family in which she was born, and entered a new family, when she was married. Henceforth, she joined her husband in sacrificing to his ancestral dead. The male members of a family, on the other hand, commemorated the departed ones of their own family with filial piety. Besides, a son carried on the family line and perpetuated his father's name in this world. A later text which undertakes to give the blessings, alleged to have been pronounced by Zarathushtra upon King Vishtaspa, depicts the prophet as wishing his royal patron no less than ten sons.[41] Son-giving is one of the attributes of Mithra.[42] This angel and Tishtrya bestow sons upon those who propitiate them.[43] Men do not pray for daughters, and angels do not reckon them among their gifts to mankind. Haoma gives renowned sons to good women,[44] but he does not give sons of priestly nature unto the woman who eats with evil intent the sacred cake consecrated to him.[45] It is further stated that the home, in which sacrificial offerings dedicated to this angel are withheld or stolen, will never have useful sons with the virtues of a priest, a warrior, or a husbandman born in it; but that men of stupid or serpentine nature will originate there.[46]

Moreover, it is always the heroic sons that the Kianians prayed for. The militant spirit seems to be a predominating factor in the life of the times. We have already seen that swarms of youthful barbarians from the north periodically overran Iranian settlements, and people had to rely upon the valour and strength of their male population for the safety of their possessions. The hero, whose valour the bards would perpetuate in their songs, and whose glorious name they would hand down to posterity, became the ideal of Iranian manhood. Display of courage was viewed with admiration and manifestation of cowardice met with universal contempt. A multitude of heroes, it is said, are born unto the householder who approaches the fire of the hearth with dry and clean wood.[47]

**Adoption.** The eager desire on the part of the people to be blessed with male issue gave rise to the custom of obtaining a

[41] Yt. 23. 5; 24. 3.
[42] Yt. 10. 65.
[43] Yt. 8. 15; 10. 28.
[44] Ys. 9. 22.
[45] Ys. 10. 15.
[46] Ys. 11. 5, 6.
[47] Ys. 62. 10; Vd. 18. 27.

son by adoption, in case a man had none born unto him. The cult of the ancestral dead occupied a prominent place in the religious life of the Iranian people, and adoption of a son ensured the continuance of the race of the dead person, and perpetuated the family cult. The custom of adopting a son prevails in the community to this day. A daughter is not so adopted, because she leaves the family of her birth and enters a new family when she is married. It may be noted here that, in the Sasanian period, as we shall have occasion to see later, women came to be adopted to guard the interests of their families. The extant Avestan texts do not enlighten us on the methods of adoption in vogue among the people, but we learn from the contents of the lost Avestan Nasks that there were various modes of adoption. These involved such questions as the fitness, or otherwise, of a person to be adopted, his removal from the position in circumstances of his fault,[48] the inheritance of wealth through adoption,[49] the liability of the adopted one regarding the debt of his adopter,[50] the guilt of a person who neglected his duty as an adopted heir,[51] and others, discussed in the legal books of the period.

**The family group.** The Iranian families were as a rule large, and children and grandchildren usually lived together under the same roof. This common house required periodical enlargement to accommodate the growing numbers until apartments and houses clustered around the original ancestral abode. The sons lived with their parents, and, when they were married, their wives came to live with them. Children born of these unions lived and throve in the house of their grandfather, who arranged for their marriages, even as he had done in the case of his own sons. Thus the master and mistress of the house usually lived to see their family steadily expanding before their eyes, and rejoiced in the autumn of life to see the smiling faces of their third and fourth generations. At the death of their father, the sons did not separate, but continued to live under the roof that covered their ancestral hearth.

The Kianian family was highly organized, and, in the extant

[48] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 35. 13, p. 31.
[49] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 35. 15, p. 31.
[50] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 9, p. 57.
[51] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42, 14, pp. 65, 66.

texts, we meet with about twenty-two separate terms to designate different relationships.

**Servants and slaves.** The poor of both the Zoroastrian and the non-Zoroastrian communities must have supplied the Iranian families with domestic servants. People of the middle class generally managed their own households, farms and cattle or poultry yards. Rich families, feudal chiefs, and land holders employed a large number of servants to work on their estates, or for domestic service. The servants usually received kind treatment from their masters, and, in many cases, were treated as members of their families. The Vendidad puts a servant below his master and mistress, but above the child of his master in the scale of fees severally to be paid to the physician to purify them of defilement.[52]

It is quite probable that from the earliest times the Aryan settlers of Iran had forced the captive aborigines into slavery. The aborigines of Gilan and Mazandaran against whom the Avestan writers inveigh in so bitter terms evidently furnished large numbers of slaves, when they were conquered.

According to the Dinkard, several Avestan Nasks, which are now lost to us, contained much information about the treatment of the slaves by their Iranian masters. Sagatum Nask, for example, discussed the right of ownership of the offspring of a female slave in one's possession.[53] We glean from the contents of Nikadum Nask that slaves of good behaviour, who had served their masters well, expected freedom for themselves, and generous-hearted persons are seen, in such cases, resigning their right of ownership, and liberating them.[54] The Shah Namah abounds in instances, according to which prisoners of war were reduced to slavery and brought to Iran. Slaves of both sexes usually formed part of the tribute, which vassal kings annually sent to the Iranian sovereign. Similarly, the royal gift to heroes, warriors, and noblemen generally, included, among other things of great value, male and female slaves in large numbers.

[52] Vd. 9. 38.
[53] Dk, vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 29, p. 61.
[54] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 8, pp. 44, 45.

## CHAPTER X

## WOMAN AND MARRIAGE

**Woman in Kianian Iran.** The position of woman, as we glean from the Avestan texts, was high indeed. The works of the earliest period speak of her as the companion of man. She did not veil herself, and attended social and religious gatherings in company with man. It is declared to be her duty to proclaim and teach what she believed to be true and good.[1] At home woman enjoyed economic freedom. She was a helpmate for her husband, and wielded great influence over the family. She owned and managed property,[2] could act as the guardian of a son disinherited by his father,[3] and could legally conduct a plea in her husband's behalf, and manage his affairs in his name.[4] She had the privilege, also, of seeking redress in court against a cruel husband, and securing his punishment.[5] The husband had no right to arrange a marriage for his daughter without the approval and consent of his wife.[6] Her evidence was competent in a court of law, and she could even become a judge.[7] In the early days of his religious ministry, Zarathushtra sought to win Queen Hutaosa as an ally in his sacred mission, hoping to gain the favour of the royal court through her influence. The prophet sacrificed unto Drvaspa and Ashi, and asked of them, as a boon, that the noble queen might embrace his new faith.[8]

Women participated in the ceremonial rites, some of which they performed by their own hands.[9] We gather from the sacred books that on certain occasions they acted as officiating priestesses.[10]

Women of the poorer classes followed regular occupations

[1] Ys. 35. 6.
[2] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 11a, p. 65; vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 5; 35. 9, pp. 19, 31.
[3] Dk., vol. 16. bk. 8. 42. 18, p 66.
[4] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 11a, p. 65.
[5] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 88, p. 78.
[6] Dk, vol. 16, bk. 8 42. 10, p. 65.
[7] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 21, p. 97.
[8] Yt. 9. 26; 17. 46.
[9] Aerpt., bk. 3. 1-8.
[10] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 28. 6, p. 14.

for a livelihood. In addition to keeping their homes, the women of agricultural class sowed the seeds, reaped the harvest, cut the corn with the sickle, milked the cows, gathered weeds for fuel, and did similar work in the fields.

We have already noticed that though it was woman who was chiefly associated in her daily household work with the fire of the hearth, the fire awoke the master of the house and not the mistress of the hearth at night, when it sought fuel for its nourishment.[11] This is because, as the head of the family, the father was also the chief of all family worship. Woman, thus, was the minor partner of man in the religious life of the family. It is interesting to note that the scale of fees to remunerate the services of a physician was lower in the case of woman than in that of man. The master of a house, for example, was cured for the value of an ox of low value, whereas the mistress of the same house was healed for the value of a she-ass. Again, the lord of a province was made to pay to his physician a chariot and four for his cure, but the lady of that province could have her health restored for the comparatively smaller payment of a she-camel to her physician.[12]

Woman, according to the Avestan texts, is entitled to the investiture with the sacred shirt and girdle at the same age as a man.[13] The purificatory spells, recited to purify a woman defiled by the dead are the same as those for man.[14] Sraosha is as much the shelter of a poor woman, as of a poor man.[15] Airyaman is invoked for the joy both of man and woman.[16] Prayers are offered for woman to protect her against harm.[17] The sacred texts celebrate the service of women who have worked for the triumph of righteousness, in the same way as in the case of righteous men.[18] Women are invited to ceremonies on the same terms as men.[19] They are also invoked in ceremonies.[20] This invocation of good women extends to good women of all time. The righteous women that are living, as well as those that are to be born, share this honour, side by side with those who have died.[21] The Guardian Spirits of pious women receive

[11] Vd. 18. 18-21.
[12] Vd. 7. 41, 42.
[13] Vd. 18. 54, 58.
[14] Vd. 11. 7.
[15] Ys. 57. 10.
[16] Ys. 54. 1.
[17] Vsp. 11. 14.
[18] Ys. 26. 4; Yt. 13. 149, 155.
[19] Vsp. 1. 5; 3. 3, 4.
[20] Ys. 2. 6; 6. 5; 39. 3; Vsp. 2. 7.
[21] Ys. 52. 1, 2; Yt. 13. 154.

invocation.[22] Similarly are their souls honoured in sacrifice.[23] Holy maids share the privilege of being thus invoked with the elderly members of their sex.[24] In addition to the righteous Iranian women, this celebration of piety in woman embraces the righteous women of the Aryan and Turanian, Sairimyan and Saini, Dahi and all other countries.[25] The Fravardin Yasht commemorates the memory of some pious maids and women by their names.[26]

Just as during her life upon earth woman is generally the equal of man in social, as well as in religious matters, so is she held to be in the world after death. Like man, she is individually responsible for her good or evil deeds. A woman's soul traverses the same regions on its way to the other world as the soul of a man, it is escorted to the same seat of judgment, justice is administered to it, and reward or retribution is dealt out to it, according to its deserts, precisely as to the soul of a man.

It may, however, be noted here that, though religion generally put woman on a level of equality with man, she had her natural disabilities which made her correspondingly inferior to man. In common with all primitive peoples, ancient Iranians dreaded the periodic menstrual function in woman. She was isolated during her period in a secluded part of the house, the food was passed to her from a distance, her touch was supposed to be defiling, and her very look was held to be desecrating to holy objects. Long usage rendered the custom sacred, and religious *tabu* came to be attached to her person. This *tabu* was never lifted. The custom had deeply entered into the daily life of the people, and woman, without any revolt on her part at being branded as unclean and dangerous, meekly submitted to this treatment; probably consoling herself with the thought that this sex function of hers was the inevitable curse of Angra Mainyu hanging over her feminine head.

**Ideal of Iranian womanhood.** The ancient Iranian type of womanly virtue is as lofty as is the position of woman in Iranian society. Virtue and diligence in woman are honoured.[27] The

[22] Ys. 1. 6, 3. 8; 4. 11; 7. 8; 26. 4, 6, 8, 10; Vsp. 16. 2; Yt. 13. 148, 149, 154, 155.
[23] Ys. 39. 2; Yt. 13. 154.
[24] Yt. 13. 141, 142.
[25] Yt. 13. 143, 144.
[26] Yt. 13. 139-142.
[27] Ys. 23. 3.

prophet exhorts brides to strive to excel even their husbands in righteousness.[28] Woman is asked to embrace faithfully good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and to be devoted to, and to be worthy of, sisterhood with Armaiti, the female genius of devotion.[29] Hvovi, the wife of Zarathushtra, implores Daena, the feminine impersonation of religion, to grant that her prophet-husband should inspire her to think, speak, and act according to the precepts of religion.[30] Good fortune, good birth, and good form are some of the feminine qualifications most highly valued,[31] but a chaste body is declared to be the richest treasure of woman. Conjugal infidelity is an unpardonable offence against society, and an inexpiable sin against Ashi, the female genius of chastity. The infringement of chastity on the part of woman grieves Ashi, who is pictured as bewailingly seeking to flee to the heavens or sink into the earth at the sight of an unchaste woman.[32]

**The Iranian view of marriage.** Zoroastrianism, as already seen, stands pre-eminently for every kind of increase and progress, and marriage, being the surest means for the propagation of the race, came to be regarded as a religious function of incomparable merit. The begetting of children, it is held, furthers the kingdom of Ahura Mazda, and cripples the power of Angra Mainyu. It is expressly said that Ahura Mazda prefers a married man living with his wife and children to an unmarried man.[33] It is a sin to prevent a maiden from marrying,[34] and Ashi is grieved at those who dissuade maids from marrying and begetting children.[35] It is an act of great religious merit to help poor persons to marry.[36] It is declared to be one means of expiating sins.[37]

Marriage is a religious duty incumbent upon all, upon priest as much as upon layman. The ascetic ideal of life is foreign to the teachings of Zarathushtra, and in Iran marriage was never considered an unwilling concession to human frailty. Matter, according to Zoroastrianism, is not inherently evil. The war between the flesh and the spirit is recognized. Yet the flesh is not to be crippled and crushed; the spirit has to regulate and con-

[28] Ys. 53. 5.
[29] Vsp. 3. 4.
[30] Yt. 16. 15.
[31] Vsp. 2. 7.
[32] Yt. 17. 57, 58.
[33] Vd. 4. 47.
[34] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 90, p. 78.
[35] Yt. 17. 59.
[36] Vd. 4. 44.
[37] Vd. 14. 15.

trol it. Hence the celibate state, even for a minister of the faith, is not held to be in any way holier than married life.

We gather no information regarding divorce from the extant Avestan texts. Marriage, we know, was not considered indissoluble. There were no restrictions against the re-marriage of either a widower or of a widow.

**Form of marriage.** The Iranians who lived before the coming of Zarathushtra, as well as those of his time were, in the main, monogamous. There are no mentions of multiple marriages in the Avestan texts. Instances of polygamy, however, occurred among the higher classes, for, according to the Shah Namah, kings and heroes often indulged in a plurality of wives and mistresses.[38]

**Aversion to marrying outside the Mazdian pale.** In the pre-Zoroastrian, as well as in Zoroastrian Iran, marriages were contracted between the members of the Mazda-worshipping community only. Mixed marriages between Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians were discouraged, and those between the faithful and the Daeva-worshippers were detested as subversive of the purity of the Zoroastrian fold. Though this was the established custom of the people, the Shah Namah mentions that several kings and heroes brought alien maidens from foreign lands, and mated with them.[39] The lost Husparum Nask refers to instances in which, as it seems, non-Iranian maidens were sought sometimes for Iranian husbands.[40]

Marriage regulations evidently permitted alliances between men and women of all the four classes of Iranian society. The priestly class had not as yet risen to the power, exercised in the later period, of arrogating to itself the right of marrying girls from the laity, while declining to give their own daughters to the youths of another class.

**The proper age for marriage.** The lost Husparum Nask, we are informed, had discussed the question of proper age for maidens to marry. We gather from the Avestan texts, as also from the Shah Namah, that boys and girls were not affianced in their childhood by the parents of Ancient Iran. Marriages, as a rule, were contracted when youths and maidens had reached

[38] ShN. 2. 195, 269, 270-272, 274-276; 3. 323.
[39] ShN. 2. 86-88; 4. 331, 332; 5. 205; 6. 24, 25.
[40] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 8, p. 20.

the years of puberty, and the age of puberty, as we have already seen, was held to be fifteen for both boys and girls.[41]

**Marriages arranged by parents or contracted by the mutual consent of the couple.** The parents or guardians generally arranged the marriage of a young couple.[42] When parents selected a wife for their son, he was usually allowed to see the bride, before the final arrangements were made.[43] We glean from the Gathas that Zarathushtra arranged the marriage of his daughter Pouruchisti.[44] She was, of course, not given away in marriage without her own expressed consent. Evidently she was consulted in the choice of the youth whom she was to pledge her troth. Girls of marriageable age, we gather from the Avestan texts, pray for husbands of their choice. Unmarried maidens beg of Vayu to grant them husbands, young and beautiful, wise and eloquent, who would make them happy all their lives.[45] Valiant husbands are sought for through Ardvi Sura.[46] Haoma also helps maidens who have long remained unmarried, to find proper husbands.[47] The ideal union is considered to be one which is based on mutual affection, and on love between husband and wife. We read in the Shah Namah interesting lives of heroes in which personal love is the basis of marriage. The most noted alliances, thus formed, and which are full of romance, are those between Zal and Rudaba, Rustam and Tahmina, and Bizan and Manijah.

**The wedded life.** A good husband and a true wife, we are told, make a happy home, which becomes the abode of Ahura Mazda and his heavenly beings. A man faithful to the teachings of Zarathushtra naturally becomes a loving husband, who tenderly loves the woman of his bosom, and is a protecting angel to her. Similarly, a woman who is a devout follower of the prophet is also devoted to her husband in weal or woe, and becomes truly a ministering angel to him, to whom she has dedicated her heart. Beauty of body is as much a gift of Ahura Mazda to humanity, as is grace of spirit. In picturesque language, the texts describe

[41] Yt. 14. 17; Vd. 14. 15; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 95, p. 79.
[42] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 89, p. 78; vol. 16, bk. 8. 33. 4, 5; 35. 17; 42. 10, pp. 26, 32, 65.
[43] Zsp. 20. 12, 13.
[44] Ys. 53. 3.
[45] Yt. 15. 39, 40.
[46] Yt. 5. 87.
[47] Ys. 9. 23.

a loving wife adorning herself in gay attire and ornaments, such as would make her attractive in the eyes of her husband, reclining on couches provided with soft cushions, and anxiously waiting to greet him with charms of beauty, on his return home from daily toil.[48] To be loved wholly and singly by the one, with whom she has linked her heart and soul, is the supreme earthly desire hidden in woman's heart. It is with this passionate desire that we see Hutaosa of the Naotara family, who later became the wife of King Vishtaspa, imploring Vayu to make her dear and beloved in the house of her royal husband.[49]

**Children born in wedlock.** We have seen that Ahura Mazda rejoices when a man raises a home to himself, with wife and children. His ministering angels assist youths and maidens in obtaining life-partners of their choice. This interest of the heavenly beings in the matrimonial alliance of man and woman does not terminate with the union of the couple, but continues unabated throughout its married life. After their marriage, both the husband and wife continue to look to them for various boons that would conduce to their happiness. For example, their continual fervent prayer is that their union may be blessed with children. When the wife is in a condition to anticipate maternity, she gently begs of Anahita to give her an easy delivery.[50] The fire of Ahura Mazda shines in burning flames in a corner of the room to ward off any evil that may be lurking there with intent to injure the new life. Every new birth, whether it be in the spacious hall of a royal palace, or on the rough ground of a farm house, sends a thrill of joy through the whole creation of Ahura Mazda, and casts a shadow of gloom over the wicked world of Angra Mainyu. The Evil Spirit and his brood seek the injury and death of the new born infant, and divine help is sought for its protection.

The ancient Iranians considered it the mother's duty to nurture the infant at her own breast. Proper and timely milk, therefore, became the earnest prayer of the mother after safe delivery. As it was the charge of Anahita to fill the breasts of women with milk, she freely gave it in sufficient quantity to her whom she had already favoured with motherhood.[51]

**The wedding hymn.** We do not know with what religious rites was marriage solemnized among the Iranian people, either

[48] Yt. 17. 10, 11.
[49] Yt. 15. 35, 36.
[50] Yt. 5. 2, 87.
[51] Yt. 5. 2.

in the pre-Zoroastrian or Zoroastrian periods. The last of the Gathas contain some fragments of the earliest wedding hymn probably recited in the days of the prophet. It refers to the celebration of the marriage of Pouruchisti, the youngest daughter of the prophet. The wedding takes place very likely at the bride's house, and Zarathushtra himself gives away his daughter in marriage. The union of the bridegroom and bride is hallowed by the prophet's benediction and counsel. Marriage, being recommended as a religious duty, it is not surprising to see the prophet strongly emphasizing the sacred character of married life in his admonitions to the marrying couple. He exhorts the husband and wife to strive to excel one another in the practice of righteousness, for the attainment of a happy wedded life.[52] Woe will befall that couple, he vigorously declares, which follows the path of wickedness.[53] He admonishes the bride to take counsel with her own understanding, to live in spiritual fellowship with Mazda, Good Thought and Righteousness, and to practise the noble deeds of Devotion.[54]

It is interesting to note that this nuptial hymn composed by the prophet, and evidently recited by him on various occasions during his life, did not continue as a part of the wedding ceremonial among the Iranians after his day. The wedding hymn that has reached us is composed in Pazand, and dates from the Sasanian period. There are, however, three Avestan passages,[55] embodied in this Pazand hymn. The angel Airyaman is invoked in one of them for the joy of the marrying couple.[56] Airyaman is generally mentioned in the Avestan texts as the genius of health, working usually in conjunction with Asha Vahishta. But Airyaman, whose origin goes back to the Indo-Iranian period, primarily represented matrimonial alliance. It seems, however, that at a very early date of the Aryan settlement in India and Persia, he lost his original character in both countries and assumed other functions. The fact that the Avestan passage invoking his help is embodied in the nuptial prayer, composed at a late period, shows that the memory of his early association with human marriage had not entirely faded in Iran.

[52] Ys. 53. 5.
[53] Ys. 53. 6, 7.
[54] Ys. 53. 3.
[55] Ys. 54. 1; 59. 30, 31.
[56] Ys. 54. 1.

# CHAPTER XI

## EDUCATION

**The religious basis of education.** The men for whom some kind of training was considered indispensable from the earliest times were the priests. As the guardians and exponents of religious truth to the people, it was recognized on all hands that they should qualify themselves by early instruction. The very nature of their sacred calling demanded that they should be educated. The recital of prayers, which was the chief work of the priests, required that the words and syllables should be pronounced correctly to secure their desired object. Similarly, most scrupulous care was needed in administering charms and reciting spells to ward off evil. Minutest care was again needed in the performance of ritual, in the consecration of sacrificial offerings, and in the handling of ceremonial implements, if the efficacy of religious rites was to be assured. Any error or neglect on the part of the officiating priest in the discharge of his holy duties would frustrate the object of ceremonial undertakings. Prayers properly offered and rituals rightly performed, it was believed, would reach the angels; whereas their benefit would accrue to the demons, if they were wrongly handled. Hence it was in religion that education first had its roots in Iran, and the ministers of religion became the early teachers as well.

**Value of education.** As Ahura Mazda is the fountain of all knowledge, as against Angra Mainyu who is ignorance itself, the acquirement of knowledge soon came to be recognized as a great virtue. The faithful are enjoined to help those who approach them seeking knowledge.[1] The understanding of Ahura Mazda is adored,[2] and both the teachers and the pupils beg Anahita to give them knowledge.[3] The Avestan texts generally speak of the innate wisdom with which a child is endowed by providence at birth, and the acquired wisdom which the adult obtains through education, and both are eagerly prayed for.

[1] Vd. 4. 44. [2] Yt. 1 31. [3] Yt. 5. 86.

Parents desire the children of good understanding.[4] Children remained at home with their parents for seven years of their life.[5] It was the father's duty after this period to see that they received good education.[6] The course of instruction evidently began at the age of eight.

**The teacher and his pupils.** The Iranian teacher is called *aethra paiti,* 'master of wisdom.' The term, however, exclusively refers to the teacher of the priestly class, and is never used in connection with one of the laity. The priests evidently instructed the pupils in all branches of knowledge, since they were the chief depositaries of both the sacred and the profane learning. Evidently, teaching being so closely associated with religion, members of the lay class had not yet joined the teaching profession. In fact, the designation has assumed from the earliest times the significance of a sacerdotal degree, and continues to be given to this very day to a priestly novice, who qualifies himself for his sacred calling.

The disciple is called *aethrya* or *hāvishta,* 'pupil.' Reverence and obedience were certainly required from the pupils, yet the personal relation between the master and his disciple were generally very cordial.[7] The teacher evinced fatherly care in the work of his pupil, and the latter was encouraged to ask freely for explanations of what he did not understand.[8] Some of the reputed teachers seem to have had a large following of scholars.[9] Saena, the great religious propagandist, who flourished a century after the prophet, had a hundred disciples.[10]

**The qualifications of a teacher.** As the Avestan teacher was primarily a religious preceptor, religious-mindedness is regarded as his indispensable qualification. In addition, he should himself be an ardent seeker after knowledge, because it is said that the man who was himself a zealous devotee of learning could best teach his pupils.[11] An ideal teacher, we are told, sits throughout the night with great zeal in the pursuit of learning. Instead of observing such studious habits, if he sleeps without

[4] Ys. 62. 5; Yt. 13. 134; Ny. 5. 11.
[5] Vd. 15. 45.
[6] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 7; 21. 2, pp. 51, 93, 94.
[7] Yt. 10. 116.
[8] Dk. SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 54. 4, p. 341.
[9] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 36, p. 70.
[10] Yt. 13. 97.
[11] Dk. SBE., vol. 37, bk. 9. 56. 3, 8, 9, pp. 346, 347.

teaching or learning, he proves false to his noble profession.[12] The teacher who did not help his pupils was regarded a sinner.[13]

**The method of teaching.** The teacher probably dictated or himself wrote out daily, some portion of the sacred texts on tablets or clay-coloured wooden slates. The pupils, on their part, learned the texts by rote, and tried to grasp the meaning.[14] Memory work, naturally occupied a prominent place in the system of teaching. The priest had to recite long sections of the sacred texts by heart in the ceremonials, and the disciples consequently needed a strong retentive memory.[15] The priests who went abroad preaching, sacrificed unto Chisti, the genius of religious wisdom, to give them a good memory [16] Important maxims and proverbs were generally memorized.[17] Therefore, perfect memory is to be reverenced by disciples.[18] Pupils were probably taught the use of the fingers for easy mathematical calculations.

**The subjects of teaching.** Children of priests and laymen alike were taught the rudiments of learning. Religion, medicine, and law seem to be the three chief branches of knowledge to which higher education extended. The warrior chiefs, themselves ambitious of military glory, were naturally eager that their sons should reap laurels on the battleground, and make a name in the annals of their country. They instructed their sons in the art of warfare, taught them how to handle the bow, to throw the javelin, to ride the horse, inured them to hardship and privation, and taught them to emulate the heroic deeds of the warrior champions of the house of Zal. Elementary learning was imparted to youths of the upper classes, and parents, who aspired to see their sons occupy administrative positions when they came of age, arranged to give them a higher education in the literature and laws of their country.

**The time of study.** Seeking wisdom all night long is the favourite expression used in reference to a youth of studious habits.[19] The first and the last parts of the day and the night were regarded as particularly suited for scholarly pursuits, and the middle part of the day, as well the middle part of the night, were declared to be the periods of rest.[20] As the new day was

[12] Vd. 18. 5, 6.
[13] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 50, p. 59.
[14] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 162, p. 88.
[15] Vd. 4. 45.
[16] Yt. 16. 17.
[17] Vd. 3. 33.
[18] Yt. 1. 31.
[19] Yt. 24. 41; Vd. 18. 5, 6.
[20] Vd. 4. 45.

counted, according to the Iranian calendar, from sunrise, the first period of study began with the early part of the day. The morning session evidently closed a little before midday, and the pupils returned home for their meals and rest. The classes again met in the afternoon, and continued their work until sunset, which terminated the regular day's work at the school. Of the four periods set apart for study, the first two periods of the day were thus passed at the school, and the remaining two periods of the night, probably a couple of hours before going to sleep and the early hours of the dawn, were devoted to the preparation of the school lessons at home.

**Education of women.** The portals of the seats of learning were open to girls as well as to boys. Girls of the upper and middle classes, as usual, learned the rudiments, but many seem to have studied the higher branches. As we shall see later, women officiated as priests at certain times, and this function must have necessitated some sort of literary qualification. Besides, reference is made to the part played by women in the administration of justice. It is expressly stated that a woman learned in law is to be preferred, in the office of a judge, to a man ignorant of it.[21]

**Schools.** We have no trace of special buildings set apart for giving instruction to the youth of Iran. A room or a veranda in a priest's house, or a room or a house annexed to a fire-temple, or a place in the courtyard adjoining a temple probably served as the school. Probably, the priestly teacher used a low wooden stool for himself, while the pupils sat cross-legged on felts upon the floor, with tablets of wooden board in hand to write upon, and swayed their bodies to and fro, while reciting their lessons.

[21] Dk., vol. 15, bk 8. 21. 21, p 97.

## CHAPTER XII

## KINGSHIP

**The titles of a sovereign.** The usual Avestan word for king is *khshathra,* which in its very meaning is indicative of his function of ruling. As a proper noun, Khshathra is the name of the fourth archangel, who impersonates the kingdom of Ahura Mazda. The term has been applied to all Zoroastrian kings who have ruled over Iran and has even survived the final extinction of the Zoroastrian royal line. The title Shah by which the Moslem kings of Persia are known to the present day is derived from the original Avestan *khshathra.*

Besides *khshathra,* another term meaning king is *dainghu-paiti,* 'lord of the country,' which is applied to King Vishtaspa.[1] The corresponding term for queen is *dainghu-pathni,* literally 'lady of the country.' Because of his overlordship of all space, from his seat in the heavens, Mithra receives the permanent title, lord of all countries.[2]

**The office of the king is hereditary.** Among the Kianians, succession to the throne was regularly in the male line. In only one case do we find a woman ascending the throne in the person of Queen Humai. The eldest son of a king was the heir apparent, and the people looked to him as the legitimate successor of his royal father. He lived with his father, fought his father's battles, and ruled some province assigned to him during his father's lifetime.[3] When there was no male or female issue of the king, some other member of the royal house was chosen to succeed to the throne. Kavi Haosravah, thus, appointed Luhrasp to the sovereignty of Iran after him.

Though the eldest son regularly succeeded to his father's throne, heroic attainments and remarkable prowess on the part of another prince sometimes influenced the choice of a sovereign, in naming his successor. Thus King Kavi Usa had three sons.

[1] Yt. 23. 1.
[2] Ys. 2. 11; 3. 13; 4. 16; 6. 10.
[3] ShN. 2. 199.

Syavarshan, the eldest, was treacherously killed in the lifetime of the king. The dead prince left a child named Haosravah who was destined to be a mighty warrior and a hero of great achievement. He avenged his father upon his enemies, and proved himself to be a matchless prince in his youth. The king naturally looked to him to be his name bearer, and announced his wish to the courtiers. The royal decision was resented by Fariburz, the king's second son, and by his supporters. Kavi Usa, thereupon, determined to settle the dispute between the two rival claimants to the throne, and announced that the princes should put their respective claims to the test, by exhibiting their valour and resourcefulness in capturing the enemy fortress of Bahman. Fariburz made an unsuccessful attack, and returned defeated. Young Haosravah brought down the strong fortress, and won the crown of his grandfather.[4]

**Coronation.** We have no record of the special religious observances that must have accompanied the ceremony of installing a king. All the information that we have on the subject is from the Book of Kings. We gather from this source that an auspicious day was fixed for the great occasion, after consulting the royal astrologers.[5] Chiefs and nobles, warriors and heroes thronged to the court, amid great rejoicings of the populace, music of pipes, and striking of drums, and blaring of trumpets. Foreign embassies came to congratulate the new king on his accession. When the nobility of the land had gathered in the throne room, the prince entered, attired in the richest costume and decked with the most precious ornaments. He ascended the throne, took the imperial crown, the chief insignia of royalty, in his own hands, and set it upon his own head. The chiefs and heroes then showered jewels upon the new king, and swore their allegiance to him.[6] In some cases, in which the ruling king resigned his throne during his lifetime, in favour of the heir apparent, he himself crowned the prince. Kavi Usa, thus, seated his grandson on the royal throne, set the crown upon the prince's head, blessed him with good wishes and showered jewels upon him. The nobles joined the old king in casting precious stones upon their new royal master.[7] Similarly, Kavi Haosravah, Vish-

[4] ShN. 2. 405-411.
[5] ShN. 5. 310.
[6] ShN. 2. 11, 12; 4. 312, 313; 5. 294.
[7] ShN. 2. 411.

taspa and Queen Humai crowned their successors Luhrasp, Bahman and Darab, respectively, with their own hands.[8]

**The status of the king.** The Iranian king wielded both temporal and spiritual authority, and theoretically, his power was absolute.[9] The king had the power of life and death over his subjects. He could wage war with a neighbour, or declare peace, according to his will. Yet, in the exercise of his sovereign right, we find him in constant consultation with the elders of the realm, and seeking the ratification of the nobles and heroes, whenever he declared war or concluded peace. Though generally of overbearing and despotic nature, the king had at times to bow before the censure of the courtiers. For example, Gudarz, the warrior, rebuked King Kavi Usa, in the presence of the nobles, for his wild adventure in essaying the sky, which had endangered the life of the sovereign and the safety of the country; and the great king humbly acknowledged the folly of his rash action.[10] When Kavi Haosravah grew melancholy in the later years of his life, and contemplated exchanging the royal robe of a king for the white raiment of a hermit, and retiring to the mountains, Zal admonished and rebuked him.[11] The same hero protested on behalf of the chiefs and nobles, against Haosravah's decision to appoint Luhrasp his successor.[12] Another great king of this period, King Vishtaspa, the patron of the national faith of Iran, had, by an unscrupulous act, brought about the untimely death of his valiant son, Asfandiyar. When the nobles of the land received the news of the tragic end of the prince, they upbraided the king for his ungenerous treatment of his son, and left the palace in a body.[13]

**The king and the people.** It was a rare privilege of the fortunate few to receive audience with the king. The masses of people contented themselves with distant glimpses of the august personage on the New Year's Day, when the king appeared on exalted place outside the palace walls, to receive homage of his people. Similarly, the subjects had the opportunity of seeing their royal master when a war broke out, and the king led his armies in person to the battlefield, or when he returned triumphant to his capital. The king on such occasions, marched in

[8] ShN. 4. 300; 5. 279, 310.
[9] Yt. 13. 18, 69; 15. 50, 54.
[10] ShN. 2. 105. 106.
[11] ShN. 4. 286-288.
[12] ShN. 4. 301.
[13] ShN. 5. 252.

state, preceded by nobles, chiefs, and commanders, amid the rejoicing of the people, who decorated the streets with wreaths, and showered flowers and coins upon the king. Unswerving loyalty to the person of the sovereign was the duty of all subjects. The king's welfare was prayed for in every Zoroastrian household. A special prayer invoking blessings upon the ruling king, follows every *āfrinakān* or prayer for blessings, recited on various occasions in an individual's house or in the fire-temple, even to this day. The officiating priest herein invokes upon the sovereign of the land the blessings of victory, long rule, health, a long life and a happy life. It is, however, only the just king, he whose rule conduces to the welfare of the righteous and to the affliction of the wicked, who is so blessed by the people. Good sovereignty is invoked [14] and only good rulers alone, who destroy the evil done by the wicked,[15] should receive the people's blessings. The fervent prayer of the people is that good kings, and not evil ones, may rule over them.[16] There is hardship in store for those who help the wicked to gain kingship.[17] Blessed are they, it is said, who hurl the wicked rulers from power.[18] The occupants of the throne, who are not solicitous for the happiness of their subjects thwart the furtherance of righteousness in the world, and the angels hear the prayers of the ill-treated subjects to overthrow such evil rulers. Haoma, for example, dethroned the tyrant king Keresani.[19]

**The king in relation to the chiefs of the country.** The king was in theory the absolute owner of the soil. He occasionally made liberal grants of lands or territories to his immediate followers, who had rendered him conspicuous services in times of need. This implied that the recipients of the royal favour should render loyal service to the sovereign in both peace and war. These holders of lands became hereditary masters of their estates and independent managers of their affairs. It was their duty to attend the royal court, when a new king came to the throne, or on other important occasions of the state, and pay homage to the king.[20] Similarly, it was their duty to supply fighting men and materials to the king in the time of war and to follow him to the battlefield.[21] Such marchlords and chieftains maintained reg-

[14] Ys. 5 5; 37. 5.
[15] Ys. 53. 8.
[16] Ys. 8. 5; 48. 5; 60. 8, 9.
[17] Ys. 31. 15.
[18] Ys. 46. 4; 48. 10.
[19] Ys. 9. 24.
[20] ShN. 3. 17; 5. 180, 181.
[21] ShN. 4. 145, 146; 5. 47, 94.

ular armies, enacted laws, executed justice, levied taxes, and ruled over the people living in their territories.

By far the most prominent chiefs to stand by the throne of Iran were the warrior chiefs of Zabulistan. A successive line of heroes of matchless prowess from this province fought for their king, often saved the country from impending danger, and wielded immense influence at the royal court. When an enemy was known to be knocking at the gate, when a dragon threatened the lives of the people, or when any kind of danger arose, the kings and courtiers hastened to send messages to Zal and Rustam to come to their help.[22] The Kianian kings held these heroes in such great respect that they sent a company of nobles, with tymbals and pipes, several days' journey, or often went themselves, to meet the heroes coming from their provinces,[23] and accompanied them considerable distances, on their departure from the court.[24] The kings often descended from the throne on the approach of the mighty heroes, and made them sit upon it.[25] King Kavi Usa, was once wrath with Rustam, rebuked him in the presence of the courtiers, and the hero left the court. Ultimately, the king had to express regret, and reconcile himself to the warrior champion.[26] When the courtiers wished to plead for anything, they deputed Rustam for the task.[27] Even members of the royal family occasionally sought his help for similar purposes. When Fariburz, for example, desired to marry the widow Farangiz, he asked Rustam to procure the royal sanction.[28] When Queen Sudabah was proved guilty of the plot of blasting the character of her step son, prince Syavarshan, with the meanest of calumnies, Rustam dragged the queen out and killed her in the presence of her royal husband.[29] Sometimes the education of an heir to the throne was entrusted to the hands of the heroes, who kept the prince with them until he had come of age and completed his training.[30] Rustam was commonly called by the nobles, as also by the kings, the crown bestower, and the king maker.[31] King

[22] ShN. 2. 92; 3. 143, 144, 274, 319.
[23] ShN. 3. 18, 281, 282, 327, 354.
[24] ShN. 3. 283.
[25] ShN. 2. 166, 198; 3. 18, 19, 274.
[26] ShN. 2. 142-144, 147.
[27] ShN. 3. 112, 113; 4. 287, 301, 302.
[28] ShN. 3. 146.
[29] ShN. 2. 340.
[30] ShN. 2. 196, 225.
[31] ShN. 2. 122, 125; 3. 143; 5. 174.

Haosravah often spoke of him as the heart of monarchs, the prop of kings, the back-bone of the host, the warden of Iran, the refuge of the army, Iran's crown, the chieftain's stay, and added that he was fortunate to have, as his servant, a hero of such incomparable valour.[32] In their own province, Zal and Rustam had a semblance of royalty about them, and lived with regal pomp. They had other petty chiefs as their vassals, and received tribute from them.[33]

**The royal court.** The king generally gave personal attention to the affairs of the state. He was helped in the performance of his arduous duties by ministers, warriors, chiefs, and other prominent members of the court. The chief posts were held by archimages, or learned priests. The king sought their counsel in all state affairs. The warriors and heroes attended the court and took their seats according to their rank, when they were in the country, in times of peace. The princes and nobles of the realm filled the throne room and shared in the working of the statecraft. The royal astrologer was another familiar figure at the court, and his services, as we shall see later, were indispensable. He determined the most auspicious day for declaring war; read the good or evil omens, when the empire was launching some hazardous enterprise; interpreted the dreams of his royal master, and performed similar functions peculiar to a diviner. The scribe was yet another important court official. His services were in constant demand to read and reply to the letters, petitions, and addresses, received from subjects, tributary chiefs, or foreign countries, or to prepare state documents.[34] The chamberlain superintended the general conduct of affairs, attended the calls of the sovereign, and admitted and introduced all who sought an audience.[35] Pages, guards, and attendants closed the number that filled the audience hall.

**The court formalities.** The courtiers thronged to the state room shortly before the coming of the king. When the chamberlain announced the royal entry, all stood up in their seats ranked in line around the throne, with folded arms and heads

[32] ShN. 3. 319, 328, 355.
[33] ShN. 5. 265.
[34] ShN. 2. 63, 244, 247; 3. 84, 86; 4. 58, 61, 185, 187, 217, 218, 233, 237, 298, 300.
[35] ShN. 2. 31; 3. 290; 4. 200, 275, 279, 357.

bent downward[36] Attended by his body-guards, the king now advanced towards the throne and took his seat. The sovereign generally sat upon the throne with the crown upon his head[37] and with an ox-head mace in his hand.[38] The court officials now took their seats upon low golden, ivory, or wooden stools.[39] The king's seat was always elevated above the others. The seat of honour was held to be at the right hand of the king,[40] and the courtiers took their seats according to their respective ranks and dignities. We see the matchless Iranian hero, Rustam, strongly resenting the seat on the left hand, which prince Asfandiyar offered him at their first encounter, and reminding the arrogant prince of the undisputed privilege, which had always been accorded him, of sitting on the right hand of the Iranian kings.[41]

When a courtier addressed the king, he rose from his seat, and remained standing.[42] When one approached the throne, to give anything to the king or to receive something from the royal hands, he first kissed the ground,[43] or the throne.[44] The reverential attitude usually observed by princes and nobles, while conversing with their sovereign, was to stand with folded arms, downcast eyes, and bowed head.[45] When a stranger approached the king with a petition, he prostrated himself on his knees, and touched his forehead and nose to the ground, before addressing him.

**Envoys and ambassadors.** The king personally controlled the foreign affairs of the state. He received ambassadors at his court and sent envoys to foreign lands. Before sending an embassy abroad, he consulted with the elders of the court, and obtained their assistance in drafting the message. Generally, he himself dictated the letter to the court scribe and had the royal seal affixed to it in his presence. The qualifications deemed essential in an envoy were fluency of speech, shrewdness, and discretion.[46] The person of the envoy was held sacred, and an ambassador from an enemy king was always immune from molestation. King Vishtaspa was enraged at first with the envoy of Arejataspa, who threatened Iran with invasion, if the Iranian

[36] ShN. 5. 170.
[37] ShN. 4. 200.
[38] ShN. 2. 222; 3. 26; 4. 292.
[39] ShN. 4. 357.
[40] Yt. 13. 63.
[41] ShN. 5. 200.
[42] ShN. 4. 286; 6. 45.
[43] ShN. 2. 63; 3. 18, 114, 115; 4. 302.
[44] ShN. 2. 77; 3. 328; 4. 236.
[45] ShN. 2. 36; 4. 279, 312; 5. 76, 83.
[46] ShN. 4. 145.

king did not renounce the new faith of Zarathushtra. The king told the members of the Turanian embassy that he would have hung them all alive, had not the religion of his country enjoined that the safety of envoys was to be preserved inviolate.[47] As a rule, they were treated with honour and courtesy. From the Shah Namah we learn the manner in which foreign missions were received at the Iranian court. When an ambassador had been escorted to the presence of the king, by the court chamberlain, his first act on approaching the throne was to do reverence to its royal occupant. The foreigner was then given a golden stool or an honourable seat in the court,[48] and, either orally delivered the message of his royal master, or delivered the letter which he had brought with him from his own country. In the latter case, the king ordered the scribe to read the letter aloud to him and his ministers. The ambassador and his party were then lodged in a comfortable place, accorded a banquet at which the nobles of the land were present, and shown other courtesies befitting their position.[49] Meanwhile, the king consulted his ministers, and prepared the reply, which was either written, or orally delivered to the envoy. When the embassy had finished its work, and were prepared to leave the country, the king bestowed rich gifts upon its chief, such as, a crown of emeralds, a pair of ear-rings, a golden torque, slaves, or purses.[50]

**Royal gifts.** The king, as a rule, lavished high honours and rich gifts on those who had earned his royal favour. Heroic achievements and works of great valour performed by warriors, or distinguished services rendered by the nobles, received liberal recognition at the hands of the sovereigns. King Kavata, for example, in appreciation of Rustam's first encounter with the Turanian king, bestowed upon him and Zal five elephants, with litters inlaid with turquoise and overspread with cloth of gold, a royal robe of gold, a crown, and a girdle wrought of jewels and turquoise; and, in addition to these rich gifts, bestowed the sovereignty of Nimruz on Zal and his descendants.[51] Similarly, when, after his seven memorable exploits, Rustam reached Mazandaran and rescued King Kavi Usa who had been made a prisoner, the king rewarded his liberator with a throne jewelled

[47] ShN. 5. 43.
[48] ShN. 4. 200, 201.
[49] ShN. 4. 357, 358.
[50] ShN. 4. 207, 359.
[51] ShN. 2. 21.

in turquoise, a crown of gems, a robe of gold, a torque, an armlet, two hundred slaves of both the sexes, a hundred steeds in golden harness, a hundred mules with golden bridles, loaded with brocades, a hundred purses filled with coins, bright stuffs, perfumes and trinkets, a ruby goblet filled with musk, and a turquoise goblet filled with rose water.[52] Among such articles of royal gift were usually found swords in gold scabbards, studded with rich jewels, signet rings, casques and coats of mail, goblets of topaz and lapis-lazuli, girdles and tunics, tapestries and embroideries, beaver skins and carpets, diadems and bracelets, elephants and camels, tents and pavilions, and various other objects of value.[53]

More valuable still for those who had won the royal favour was the bestowal by the king, in recognition of highly meritorious services, of royal patents, empowering the recipients to exercise sovereign rights over certain cities or provinces. Zal and Rustam, Tus and Giv, were thus authorized by such royal patents to rule over Nimruz, and other places of importance.[54] The king visited in state the great fire-temples, either to offer his supplications to Ahura Mazda for help in a war upon which he was embarking; to offer thanksgivings for a victory already won over an enemy, or to pray in the temple as a devout worshipper of Ahura Mazda. On such occasions, he endowed the sacred shrines with munificent sums of money, adorned them with jewels, and liberally bestowed riches upon the priests.[55] Similarly, the king's triumphant march through villages and towns, on his way from the battlefield to the capital, was the occasion of distribution of alms among the poor people.

[52] ShN. 2. 77.
[53] ShN. 2. 21, 77, 198; 3. 26-29, 283, 356; 4. 58, 236, 258, 295.
[54] ShN. 2. 77, 399, 4. 297-300; 5. 174, 203.
[55] ShN. 4. 255.

## CHAPTER XIII

## LAW AND JUSTICE

**Origin of law.** The Avestan designation of law is *dāta,* which is derived from the root *dā,* 'to establish.' In its origin, law, in Iran, is not a human convention; it is the expression of Ahura Mazda's divine will for the guidance of mankind. It is a part of religion; it is religion itself. The Mazda-worshipping religion itself is the fountain-head of all law, and is especially called *dāta vidaeva,* 'the law against the demons.'[1] No less than seven books, that is, fully one-third of the entire Zoroastrian canon, are devoted to law.[2] The third line of Ahuna Vairya, the primeval Word of Ahura Mazda, is declared to be the quintessence of this legal section of Zoroastrianism.[3] Only one of these seven legal works, namely, *vīdaeva dāta,* or Vendidad, has reached us in more or less a complete form. This work has from remote times formed a part of the Zoroastrian ritual, and has always been recited by the officiating priests for the religious merit of the laity. The book furnishes us with considerable material regarding the laws and ordinances in force among the Avestan people.

Besides the Vendidad, we have the contents of the lost legal Nasks or books preserved in the later Pahlavi works. The irreparable loss of the original Avestan law-books is partly compensated by these more or less exhaustive legal indexes, which give us some idea of the mode of legal procedure of the times.

We learn from the contents of the lost Nasks that various questions bearing on justice were discussed therein, such as the power of appointing judges, and the authority with which they were invested;[4] the various grades of judges with a supreme judge over all of them;[5] severity and leniency on the part of the

[1] Ys. 1. 13; 2. 13; 71. 5; Yt. 11. 17; Vd. 5. 22-25; 19. 16.
[2] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. introd. 4, 10, pp. 2, 3, 5.
[3] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. introd. 6, p. 4.
[4] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 72, p. 76.
[5] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 12, 17, pp. 95, 96; vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 19, p. 66.

officiating judges;[6] the maintenance of the dignity of the judges;[7] miscarriages of justice;[8] and various questions relating to the subject.

**Nature of law.** The outstanding feature of Iranian jurisprudence is the religious character indelibly stamped upon it by the priesthood, who owing to the belief of the divine origin of law were recognized as its natural interpreters, and, in the early days of Iranian society, also, as its only jurists and judges. All laws, whether sacred or profane, civil or criminal, are influenced and regulated by religious beliefs and ritual practices. Ahura Mazda himself is represented as laying down rules and precepts for the conduct of man in his relation to society, or with reference to the general conduct of his life upon earth. The Vendidad is thus the codification of religious, ethical, ecclesiastical, ritual, social, penal, and hygenic laws. The Iranian state took cognizance of wrongs which were purely theological. Religious offences were punished with as much rigour as were civil and criminal wrongs. Religious penances, sacrificial atonements, ceremonial observances are, as we shall see later, among the forms of punishments prescribed along with bodily chastisement for various crimes.

**Administrators of justice.** In the earlier periods of Iranian society, the tribunals of justice were evidently composed of priests who were superior to the laity in intelligence. Later, with the spread of learning, lay judges began to share the judicial work of the country. Even women, as we shall see anon, often acted as judges. The judges decided cases that came before them according to the rules and regulations laid down in the Avesta and Zend, in accordance with the decisions and general verdicts of the ancients.[9] Consequently, the priests, being more intimately acquainted with the religious lore, retained all higher judicial positions in their hands, and all contested lawsuits came before them for decision.

**Qualifications of a judge.** To be well-versed in law was, of course, the prime esssential in a judge.[10] It is expressly said that even a woman or a minor learned in law is to be preferred,

[6] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 73, p. 76.
[7] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8 21. 16, pp. 95, 96.
[8] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 15, p. 51; 19. 104, p. 80.
[9] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 69, p. 76.
[10] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 74, p. 76.

for appointment as a judge, to an adult who is ignorant of law.[11] A judge whose decisions often prove to be erroneous is unqualified for his post.[12] Experience in a learned judge who has been on the bench for several years is valued, and his rulings and decisions are viewed with great confidence.[13]

Though learning is an essential qualification in a judge, uprightness of character, we are told, is indispensable to him. A judge should be an inveterate foe of brigands, tyrants and murderers.[14] The merit of the work of a truthful judge is greater than any other meritorious deed.[15] A good judge spreads happiness among the people, whereas a false one brings calamity to the country.[16] An honest person who holds the scales of justice in his hands causes joy to the angels, and spreads sorrow among the demons. His good work is further rewarded in the next world, just as heavy retribution falls to the lot of an evil judge.[17] There is no atonement that can wash away the guilt of a false judge.[18] He is a sinner who declares the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent.[19] Criminal is the judge who decides with reference to the status of the litigants,[20] and whose rulings are swayed by party feelings.[21] Rashnu, the angel of truth, befriends the poor who have failed to secure justice at the hands of a dishonest judge whom Angra Mainyu courts.[22] Persons who thus abused their power as judges were evidently punished by the state.[23]

**Places of justice.** We have already stated that in the early period of the evolution of Iranian society, the priests alone executed judicial functions, and that it was at a later stage that the laity secured the privilege of sharing the legal administration of the country. Similarly, fire-temples, or some adjoining parts of these places of worship, served also as the early law courts. Law being regarded as a branch of religion, and the ministers

[11] Dk., vol. 15, 8. 19. 29, p. 69; 21. 21, p. 97.
[12] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 76, p. 77; 21. 10, p. 95.
[13] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 9, pp. 64, 65.
[14] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 159, p. 88.
[15] Dk, vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 161, p. 88.
[16] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 28, p. 22
[17] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 29, p. 22.
[18] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 19, p. 96.
[19] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 8, p. 64.
[20] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 151, p. 86.
[21] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 26, p. 97.
[22] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 157, p. 87.
[23] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 8, p. 63.

of religion having the guardianship of justice in their hands, it was but natural that the temples should be the centres of both religious and judicial activities. As we shall have occasion to see, rituals were given an important place in the trial of lawsuits, especially in the administration of oaths and in the performance of ordeals. Besides, the fire and the ceremonial implements required for the performance of rituals on such occasions could be of an easy access in the close vicinity of the temples.

**Legal procedure.** The place set apart for the administration of justice was usually thronged by the litigating parties, their friends, relatives, and witnesses. Proper measures were taken to maintain the dignity of the court, and disciplinary rules were laid down for the general guidance of the people. Disturbance caused by those gathered in the premises, either by loud talking or by the use of improper words by persons who lost their cases were promptly punished.[24] The judges were helped in their work by subordinate officials, with whom the aggrieved parties lodged their complaints. The complainant, or several of them in cases when several creditors proceeded against a common debtor, asked for a summons.[25] The accused could be held in bail, if proper security was produced.[26] Otherwise, he was removed to the house of detention pending his trial. Attempts were evidently made to elicit confession from the guilty, and the texts refer to full confession of guilt,[27] or partial confession,[28] or the one made on different occasions in as many as three versions.[29] The disputants could, if they so chose, appoint an arbitrator, and come to an amicable settlement, instead of fighting out their case in the court.[30]

Attempts were made to do away with undue delays in dealing out justice, and time limits were fixed for the delivery of judgments and examining witnesses, as also for the general conduct of the case.[31] Both complainant and defendant had to conform to the rules, and had to finish their statements in the

[24] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 27, pp. 68, 69.
[25] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 47, p. 58.
[26] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 23, p. 52.
[27] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 25, 131, pp. 68, 84.
[28] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 48, 49, p. 58.
[29] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 3, p. 64.
[30] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 16, 25, pp. 51, 53.
[31] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 15, p. 95.

time allotted to them.[32] Similarly, the lawyer had to refrain from speaking at an undue length in arguing the case on behalf of his client.[33] Despite these measures to expedite the judicial work, complaints were not uncommon of the protraction of a lawsuit to several sittings, sometimes, to as many as twenty-two.[34] The texts refer to the litigants often dilating upon false issues, and the judge, negligently, or through any other motive, allowing them to waste the time of the court.[35]

**The interpreters of law.** The texts speak of a class of men literally called 'speakers of law,'[36] who being acquainted with law, interpreted and explained legal intricacies and helped the contestants to conduct their case. It is said that in minor cases, which did not necessitate bodily punishment for the guilty persons, and in which the officiating judge happened to be the High Priest, there was no need of quoting references from law books, or of citing decisions of corresponding cases. But it was essential that the advocates of the contending parties should support their arguments by legal references, whenever it might be probable that the culprit would be physically punished.[37] An advocate was authorized to take over the case of a man who could not fight out his case to the end, because of poverty.[38] This passage refers to the charitable act of a lawyer conducting his case with no hope of remuneration, or, possibly, it suggests state help in enabling a poor man to secure justice. The latter is more probable, because there are indications that state provisions did exist for the succour of poor and helpless persons.[39] Intercession on behalf of a helpless illiterate person, with the judge, or other higher authorities, or even with the kings, in the final resort, is also mentioned.[40]

**Law of evidence.** It was essential for the disputing parties to furnish evidence to prove their rival claims. The man who could not produce any kind of evidence to support his statement had, under ordinary circumstances, no case at all to fight out.[41]

[32] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 51, p 73
[33] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 11, pp. 64, 65.
[34] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 53, p. 73.
[35] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 8, 9, pp. 94, 95.
[36] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 24, pp. 52, 53.
[37] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 5, pp. 62, 63.
[38] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 24, pp. 52, 53.
[39] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 133, p. 84.
[40] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 128, p. 84.
[41] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 13, 20, pp. 66-68.

The two kinds of evidence recognized were the verbal and the documentary, both of which might be submitted in a case, or either of the two.[42] These were, again, divided into various grades, and their bearing upon different cases was explained. From the many subject headings found in the Dinkard, we learn that the law of evidence must have been worked out in great detail in the original works.[43] Occasionally, the status of the witness who appeared in the court to give evidence influenced the court. Evidence submitted by the chief of a profession, by a high priest, or by three persons together, was considered trustworthy.[44] Although full confidence was to be placed on the evidence of such credible witnesses, we see the rule qualified by the statement that there might arise occasions when the testimony of even a high priest, or of three persons collectively, might not count.[45] The mode of procedure in case of the evidence of doubtful persons, and even that of thieves, formed part of the general discussion in the lost works.[46] The sinful nature of giving false evidence was emphasized by declaring it as caused by Angra Mainyu.[47]

**Law of property.** A section of the Husparum Nask, we are informed, dealt with the subject of the ownership of property.[48] Articles of law were enacted for the regulation of properties set apart for the religious purposes, as also for inheritance and possession of private property Some seven kinds of property, of which unfortunately no description is given, were not to be accepted as security[49] Disputes occasionally arose, either about the management, or the appropriation, of the proceeds of properties given away in charities, and the court gave its rulings on such occasions.[50] When an administrator of such a trust died, leaving no successor to take charge of it, the court was moved to intervene. For example, when a priest who was the custodian of some public funds died in a foreign country, to which he had journeyed on his priestly duties, the question arose of

[42] Dk., vol 15, bk. 8 15. 5, pp. 37, 38
[43] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 15. 6-12, pp. 38-40
[44] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 60, p. 74
[45] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 103, p. 80
[46] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8 20. 10, p. 92
[47] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 157, p. 87.
[48] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 35. 1, pp. 30, 31.
[49] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 164, p. 88.
[50] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 37, p. 70.

appointing another in his place to manage the property of the trust, and the matter was then taken to the court.[51]

Non-Iranian races living in Iran, and people of the frontier territories, who had entered into commercial transactions with the Iranians, secured justice at the hands of the Iranian judges in their disputes with the Iranians. Foreigners evidently held property in Iran, and lawsuits often arose in their dealings with the natives of the country.[52]

In the lost legal Nasks were discussions of the various disputes arising among the holders of joint property,[53] those about a testator distributing his property before death,[54] the liabilities on the property of the deceased parents, and their acceptance or not on the part of the heirs,[55] absence of testimony regarding the proprietary rights of one's own property,[56] misappropriation of property,[57] passing of some property to the hands of a criminal,[58] and other similar problems relating to ownership.[59]

**Sequestration and confiscation.** A section of the Sakadum, or eighteenth, Nask deals with the law of sequestration of property, more particularly of animals. Horses and camels, oxen and sheep, formed the chief property of the people, and the book lays down minute rules regarding the confiscation, retention, and care of animals kept in custody, in part satisfaction of the claims of the creditors or of the state. Among the matters discussed in detail were: the seizure and confinement of a horse, or of a beast of burden; the limit of time within which the animal was to be kept; the charges of a sentinel; the suckling of the young one, when such was with the sequestered animal; the use of milk of such animals; the shearing and lambing of sheep in the fold and the food to be given them; penalty for an animal that was not properly fed, and died of starvation; and various other questions bearing upon the subject.[60]

Similarly, the law books prescribed rules for the confiscation

[51] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8 19. 44, pp. 71, 72.
[52] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 26, p. 68; vol. 16, bk. 8. 35. 6, p. 31.
[53] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 79, p 77.
[54] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 30, p. 53.
[55] Dk, vol. 15, bk. 8 19. 45, 81, 82, pp. 72, 77, 78
[56] Dk., vol. 15, bk 8. 19. 32, p. 69.
[57] Dk., vol. 15, bk 8. 19 35; 21. 7, pp. 70, 94; vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 42, p. 24.
[58] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 148, p 86
[59] Dk, vol. 16, bk. 8. 35. 2-4, p. 31.
[60] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 38. 1-16, 24-26, pp 49-54.

of a slave, to work off the debt of a defaulter, that of a cloak, a water-skin, corn, clothes, utensils, cultivated and uncultivated farms, and of the ornaments of gold, silver, and pearls.[61]

**Loan and interest.** As payment in all kinds of business transactions was made in kind, so fields, cattle, grain, and other commodities were exchanged in lending and borrowing. Besides his claim over the amount that he may have lent, the creditor was entitled to some kind of increase, that is, interest on his advances. One of the last sections of the Sakadum Nask is called Vakhshishtan, or code of increase.[62] Laws were enacted regulating the dealings between lenders and borrowers, in regard to the capital and the interest,[63] the renewal of a contract in case of the death of a creditor,[64] the liability on the part of a person who inherited the property of a debtor upon which interest was running,[65] the increase on increases, or compound interest; the inheritance by children of a property and the accumulated interest thereon;[66] the legal decision in cases where a debtor was unable to fulfil his obligations at the time when they fell due;[67] the agreement to pay off the debt with its incurring interest by instalments; the irregularity on the part of the debtor in his yearly payment; the limit of leniency on the part of the creditor,[68] and several similar questions bearing upon the subject.

## Oath

**Applications of oath.** The Avestan word for oath which occurs but once in the extant literature [69] is *saokenta*, from which the modern Persian *sugand* is derived. Later Pahlavi and Persian works which treat of the period with which we are presently concerned depict kings, heroes, and ministers freely swearing for various purposes. Primarily, an oath was taken to guarantee the truthfulness of one's statement, and to avoid incurring suspicion When Rustam, for example, heard that his kinsmen had fought

[61] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 29-34. pp. 61, 62.
[62] Dk., vol. 16, bk 8. 40 1, p 56.
[63] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 7, p. 57.
[64] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8 40. 8, p 57.
[65] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 9, p. 57.
[66] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 18, p 59.
[67] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 22, p. 60.
[68] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 27, 28, pp. 60, 61.
[69] Vd. 4. 54.

with, and slain, Asfandiyar's sons, he was much grieved, and, to convince the prince that he had had no hand in the crime, he swore before him.[70] Recourse was also had to the oath for the purpose of emphasizing one's resolve to fulfil some act; for the sake of enhancing the value of a given promise, or for similar purposes in which a person sought to intensify his utterances. When the aged King Kavi Usa resigned the throne in favour of Haosravah, he made the young prince swear that he would never rest until he had avenged himself upon the Turanian Franrasyan or Afrasiyab of the Shah Namah, for the murder of Syavarshan.[71] Similarly, Bizan swore not to remove the saddle from his horse, until he had avenged Zarasp.[72] Rustam once made a threat to the army, that he would fetter and humiliate any soldier who fled from the battlefield, and emphasized it by an oath.[73] When Vishtaspa's brother fell on the battlefield, and the country's hope grew dim, he declared that he would give his own daughter to the hero who would turn the scale of battle, and backed his offer with an oath.[74] The same king promised upon oath to relinquish the throne in favour of Asfandiyar, if the prince brought Rustam in fetters to his court.[75] Bizan asked Manijah to swear that she would not reveal the secret to anybody, before he gave her his confidence regarding Rustam's strategem to release him from the dungeon.[76]

The oath was indispensable in all legal procedure, and the disputants were always put to the oath. We shall discuss this point in the chapter on the ordeal with which the oath is closely connected.

**The binding nature of an oath.** Since all kinds of oaths were invested with religious sanction, an oath-breaker was liable to be punished by the heavenly beings. To break an oath was a crime punishable by a human court, but that was not enough. It was a sin, and the perjurer called down upon himself the wrath of supernatural powers.

When King Vishtaspa made warlike preparations against Arejataspa, he desired his wise minister Jamaspa, the reputed diviner of his court, to read the stars and foretell the consequences of the war. The shrewd astrologer who had already convinced

[70] ShN. 5. 228.
[71] ShN. 3. 21, 22.
[72] ShN. 3. 59, 60.
[73] ShN. 3. 226.
[74] ShN. 5. 64.
[75] ShN. 5. 173.
[76] ShN. 3. 341.

himself that the stars were not favourable to Iran in the war upon which the king was embarking, did not venture to lay before his royal master the gloomy forecast. Therefore, he begged the king to swear that he would not harm him, when he disclosed the secret of heavens; and the king swore, as he was requested.[77] When, however, the king heard that the war would go against him, and that twenty-three of the princes of royal blood would fall in the catastrophe to be suffered by the Iranians, he drew his sword and fell upon the discloser of this inauspicious news, and was restrained from killing him only when he recalled the binding nature of the oath which he had sworn.[78] When Rustam pleaded before Haosravah for Gurgin's release from imprisonment, the king pleaded his inability to comply, saying that he had sworn by his throne and crown, by Mars, Venus, the sun and moon, to punish him, although later he yielded to Rustam's persuasion.[79]

**Self-imprecatory oaths.** The Avestan texts mention no instances in which the oath taker swears by any persons or objects, such as are frequent in the later works, to which we shall have occasion to refer. We have, however, in the sacred texts references to the mode of taking oath in the form of a curse. Mithra, the angel of truth, is accompanied by Dami Upamana at the ordeal court. This co-adjutor of Mithra impersonates the magic power of the curse. In the early stages of Iranian society, when the institutions of human justice had not been sufficiently developed, divine help was invoked in the trial of offenders. The contending parties were put to the oath, and were made to utter self-imprecations, invoking divine wrath and untold calamities upon the person who swore falsely. Both the officer who administered the oath, and the person who took it, believed implicitly that the malediction of Dami Upamana would relentlessly follow those who foreswore themselves. As the punishment for perjury against Mithra, it is said, that Dami Upamana falls upon the offender, in the shape of a sharp-toothed, terrible boar, and destroys him at a stroke.[80]

**Oaths taken upon divine beings, persons, and objects.** As the oath came to be recognized as an integral part of legal proceedings, business contracts, agreements, and treaties, the range

[77] YtZ. 41, 42.
[78] YtZ. 50-52.
[79] ShN. 3. 332, 333
[80] Yt 10. 127.

of objects to swear upon widened, until it embraced all celestial and terrestrial beings and animate and inanimate objects. According to the Pahlavi Yatkar-i Zariran, King Vishtaspa swore before his minister by the glory of Ahura Mazda, the Mazdayasnian religion, and the life of his own brother.[81] In another place we see him swearing by the Zend Avesta, Zarathushtra, and fire.[82] To assure King Kavi Usa of his firm determination to act according to his behest, young King Haosravah took an oath upon God, day and night, sun and moon, throne and casque, signet and sword and diadem.[83] We have already seen the same king swearing by his throne and crown, by Mars and Venus, by the sun and moon [84] Bizan swore by the creator, the moon, and the diadem.[85] Firdausi puts an oath into the mouth of Rustam, and makes him swear by the king's life and head, the sun and moon, Iran's host, and the dust of the murdered prince Syavarshan;[86] and at another time by the sun, the scimitar, and the battlefield, in addition to the king's life and head.[87]

**Ceremonial rites to strengthen the validity of an oath.** We have already referred to the connection between the oath and the ordeal, and we shall see in our discussion that the ordeal, as also the oath which preceded it, was accompanied by an elaborate ritual. As it seems, there was a certain prescribed manner in which the various oaths were to be taken. When Jamaspa asked King Vishtaspa to take an oath, he requested him to rub his sword of steel and an arrow of the jaw-bone three times in the name of Drvaspa, the angel presiding over cattle.[88] Haosravah swore with his face turned towards fire.[89]

## ORDEALS

**Ordeal code.** The Avestan word for ordeal is *varah* from which is derived the later *varistān* or the code of ordeals.[90] The term *varah* is not found in the Gathas, though ordeals, especially in an eschatological sense, are expressly mentioned. The twelfth Yasht, dedicated to Rashnu, deals wholly with the ordeals.

[81] YtZ. 41, 42, 52.
[82] ShN. 5. 64, 173.
[83] ShN 3. 21, 22.
[84] Sh.N. 3. 332.
[85] ShN 3. 59, 60.
[86] ShN. 3. 226.
[87] ShN. 5. 228.
[88] YtZ. 41.
[89] ShN. 3. 21, 22.
[90] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8 41. 1, p. 62.

There are stray references to the ordeals in different Avestan texts which we shall see as we proceed with the subject. We gather, however, from the summary of the contents of the lost Avestan Nasks given in the Pahlavi Dinkard, that important sections of the Nikadum and Sakadum Nasks were devoted to the treatment of ordeals.

**Use of ordeals.** The chief object of an ordeal, as also of an oath, was to discover guilt. Persons who swore an oath, or submitted to an ordeal, had to fear the wrath of divine beings, in case they were guilty. It was believed that a guilty person would be scorched, burnt, drowned, or made to suffer in diverse ways, according to the nature of the ordeal, to which he was subjected.

Thus, the ordeal was the indicator of innocence and guilt in legal proceedings. When it was impossible to discover the truth by direct evidence, the litigant parties were put to a physical test. When the right of a property was contested, resort was had to an ordeal.[91] A wizard, suspected of having caused sickness by witchcraft, was ordered to pass through an ordeal.[92] Similarly, persons accused of sorcery, murder, and other clandestine crimes, were put to the ordeal.[93] Recourse to ordeals was often had to prove one's steadfastness in religion, as also to demonstrate the indisputable nature of religious truths.[94]

**Classification of ordeals.** Iranian jurists made two general divisions of ordeals. These were hot ordeals and cold ordeals.[95] The hot ordeals consisted in walking through fire, dipping the hand in boiling water or oil, or pouring molten metal on body. In the cold ordeals a person was obliged to hold sacred Baresman twigs in the hand, eat excessive quantities of food, swallow a specially prepared liquid, or cut certain parts of his body with a knife. The original number of ordeals alleged to have been prescribed by Zarathushtra was thirty-three,[96] though no more than six or seven are distinctly mentioned in the extant Iranian literature.

**Ordeal by fire.** In Zarathushtra's faith fire is the most

[91] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8 19 67, p. 75.
[92] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 1, p. 62.
[93] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 3, pp. 62, 63.
[94] Zsp. 21. 24-27.
[95] AfrG. 9; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 55, p. 73; vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 6, p. 63.
[96] Dk., vol. 14, bk. 7. 4. 3, p. 37.

sacred emblem, and the truest symbol of universal light, which is Ahura Mazda's very self. Fire is the great purifier of physical impurity, also the best purger of spiritual uncleanliness, or sin. Hence, in the Gathas, we find Zarathushtra indicating fire as an indispensable medium for distinguishing between the innocent and the guilty in this world, and stating that the good shall be separated from the evil through the instrumentality of the glowing fire, at the time of Renovation. It is through his blazing fire, says Zarathushtra, that Ahura Mazda will make manifest the right and wrong, and give decision to the good and wicked.[97] The fire of Ahura Mazda punishes the wicked alone, and the prophet declares that it will be a manifest joy to the good, although harmful to the wicked.[98]

The chief of the hot ordeals seems to have been that of walking through the fire. Tradition speaks of the fire ordeal as instituted by the archangels. When Zarathushtra conferred with them in heaven, we are told, he was made to pass through the fire, and was not burned.[99] Moreover, the ordeal by fire was practised in Iran from early times. The Shah Namah furnishes us with an instance of such an ordeal which took place long before the birth of Zarathushtra. When Queen Sudabah accused Syavarshan with foul accusations, the prince cheerfully consented to undergo a fire ordeal, to prove his innocence. A hundred camels, the poet informs us, brought firewood, of which two piles were made, leaving a passage between, to enable a horseman to pass. Black naptha was then poured over the fuel and a huge fire kindled. The prince, attired in white garments, plunged into the thick of the blazing fire, whose flames closed over his head, and emerged unscathed, thus vindicating his character.[100]

**Ordeal by molten metal.** The burning liquid of the metals of the earth as the final purifier of the guilt of mankind, at the time of Renovation, is elaborated in the later Zoroastrian works. The Gathas of Zarathushtra twice refer to this great eschatological ordeal. It is through the molten metal, says Zarathushtra, that Ahura Mazda will ultimately deal out the destinies of the good and wicked.[101] In his conference with the archangels, ac-

[97] Ys. 31. 3, 19; 43. 4; 47. 6; 51. 9.
[98] Ys. 34. 4.
[99] Zsp. 21. 24.
[100] ShN. 2. 219-221.
[101] Ys. 32. 7; 51. 9.

cording to the Zatsparam, the prophet is said to have been shown, three physical tests to demonstrate the truth of the faith. One of these was the pouring of hot metal on the chest of the prophet, which failed to injure him.[102] Zarathushtra is thereupon commanded by Ahura Mazda to exhort his disciples to resort to this ordeal to demonstrate the truthfulness of religion, whenever it is doubted by unbelievers.[103]

**Miscellaneous tests.** The Avestan texts enumerate some other forms of ordeal, without, however, describing the manner in which they were applied. One of these, already referred to, is called the Baresman ordeal from the fact that the person going through the ordeal rites held a three-twigged Baresman in hand.[104] Among the ordeals incidentally mentioned by name may be mentioned the faith ordeal,[105] that of excessive eating,[106] the ordeal of truth-indicating golden waters,[107] and the one by inflicting wounds.[108]

**Religious basis of the ordeal.** Above all an ordeal was an appeal to divine powers, when human resources had failed. The archangels themselves, as we have seen, are said to have demonstrated the worth of ordeals to the prophet. Hence it was that the celestial beings were invoked, by means of religious formulas and elaborate ceremonials, to come down to the court to help the human officers of the ordeal court. Ahura Mazda, it seems, was invoked through the performance of Yasna sacrifice at the place in which an ordeal was to be performed.[109] The six stanzas of Ys. 36 are said to refer to six forms of hot ordeal, and must have been recited on such occasions.[110] Zarathushtra is said to have recited the three cardinal words of his faith, good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, when the archangels took him through ordeals.[111] The Yasht dedicated to Rashnu, the genius of truth, is exclusively devoted to ordeals, and is the chief prayer which must have been recited on the occasion of trial by ordeal. On being invoked for help, Ahura Mazda is

[102] Zsp. 21. 24.
[103] Zsp. 21. 25.
[104] Yt. 12 3; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 38; 19. 66, pp. 55, 75.
[105] Dk., vol. 15, bk 8. 19. 15 pp. 66, 67.
[106] Dk, vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 33, p. 69.
[107] Vd. 4. 54, 55.
[108] Zsp. 21. 26.
[109] Dk., vol 15, bk. 8. 19. 14, p. 66; vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 5, p. 63.
[110] Sls. 13. 17.
[111] Zsp. 21. 24.

depicted as coming down to the place of an ordeal, accompanied by the angels Vata, Dami Upamana, Kingly Glory and Saoka.[112] But the chief celestial functionary, whom Ahura Mazda has specially appointed for the supervision at the ordeals, is Rashnu. According to the sacred texts, the officiating priest calls him righteous, most upright, most holy, most knowing, most discerning, most fore-knowing, most far-seeing, and the best smiter and destroyer of thieves and robbers.[113] He is implored to turn his steps to the place of ordeal, if he happens to be at that time in one of the seven zones of the earth, or on the mountains, or rivers, or oceans, or stars, or moon, or sun, or at the farthest end of the earth, or in heaven.[114]

**Regulations about the conduct of ordeals.** Elaborate rules seem to have been laid down regulating the performance of ordeals. Owing to the religious aspect of ordeals, to which we have already referred, the judges and officers who administered them were taken principally from the priestly class. The High Priest presided at the function,[115] and was helped in his duties by several officers,[116] who had specific functions to perform according to the prescribed laws.[117] The number of officers to watch the ordeal, the order of precedence to be observed by those who attended the ordeal trials, the number of witnesses required, and other similar questions of detail, were to be decided in accordance with the prescribed rules.[118] The texts refer to the time and place of ordeals without, however, much enlightening us on the subject.[119] As ordeals were accompanied by the performance of sacrificial rites and the recital of the sacred formulas by priests, it is probable, that fire-temples or some adjoining places, as already noticed, must have served as law courts. All persons were not freely admitted to witness the ordeal proceedings. Restrictions were laid down against certain objects to be brought in at the trial, likewise, doubtful persons were debarred from entering the ordeal meetings[120] The quantity and

[112] Yt. 12. 4.
[113] Yt. 12. 7, 8.
[114] Yt. 12. 9-38.
[115] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 56, p. 73.
[116] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 5, p. 63.
[117] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 16, p. 67.
[118] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 14, 15, 54, pp. 66, 67, 73.
[119] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 55, p. 73.
[120] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 4, p. 63.

quality of wood to be used at fire ordeals, as also the implements needed at the various other ordeals, were carefully chosen as prescribed by rules.[121] In some cases, it seems that ordeals were adjusted with reference to the social position of the parties concerned, and the ordeal rules exempted men of distinction and good repute from the physical test.[122] Ordeals of lesser or greater degree of severity were prescribed, in proportion to the gravity of the crime.[123] These were fixed by the judges, in some cases both parties simultaneously volunteered to undergo a certain kind of ordeal, or, again, one party challenged the other to prove its case by an ordeal. Judgment evidently went against the person by default, if he shrank from submitting himself to the test, when challenged so to do.

## Crimes and Punishment

**Classification of crimes.** Wrongs liable to punishment by the state may be ranged under five classes. The first class consisted of crimes against morality, such as adultery, abortion, and unnatural crime Those against property constituted the second class, and were chiefly breach of contract, theft, and robbery. Under the third group, which may be termed crimes against the person, fell assaults and murder. Defilement and uncleanliness, burial of the dead, and all that contaminates the earth, water, and trees were punishable wrongs, according to the tenets of the Zoroastrian legislators, and can, therefore, be classed as the crimes against public health. Similarly, the ill-treating and ill-feeding of animals, and other kinds of cruelty to them, formed the fifth class, that is, the crimes against animals.

The Avestan legislators generally prescribe the corresponding penalty for the infringement of every rule at the time of laying it down. We shall follow their method and discuss crimes and their punishments together.

**The nature of punishment.** Breaches of law were punished by flogging, by a fine, by bodily mutilations, or with death, by exclusion from participation in social and religious festivals, by penal servitude, by branding, and by compelling a criminal to kill

[121] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 41, p. 71.
[122] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 19, p. 67.
[123] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 40, 66, pp. 70, 71, 75.

a certain number of noxious animals. Among these various forms of punishment, flogging is the one most frequently prescribed in the ecclesiastical law code embodied in the Vendidad. Two special implements called *Aspa ashtrya* and *Sraosho charana* were used for administering the stripes. The number of blows specified for different offences ranges from five to ten thousand. This extravagant number of blows, which would be physically impossible for human endurance, probably exhibit a theoretical severity, intended to impress the gravity of the offences upon men, was greatly relaxed in practical application.

Heavy shackles, forged of iron with strong rivets, were used to fetter a prisoner's hands and feet.[124] In addition to the prisons for ordinary offenders, dungeons existed for the worst criminals.[125] Gallows and gibbets were used for hanging, and, as we gather from the texts, the condemned was generally hung head downward.[126]

The underlying principles on which the system of punishment is based are penal and reformatory. A crime committed for the first time was punished lightly. If, however, the light punishment failed as a deterrent, and the offence was repeated, the punishment was proportionately increased.

Any man who did not observe the seasonal festivals, by contributing his share to the communal feast, was expelled from the communal fold.[127]

## Crimes against Morality

**Adultery and prostitution.** Sexual infidelity is declared a grave moral offence. An unmarried man who seduced a virgin was compelled to marry her. Violation of the sanctity of marriage grieves Ashi Vanghuhi, the female genius of chastity. Complaining about the married woman who consorts with a stranger, and deceitfully passes off the child of her adultery upon her innocent husband, Ashi exclaims before Ahura Mazda that this exhibition of moral laxity is so revolting, that she would

[124] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 3, p. 90; vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 2, pp. 63, 64; ShN. 5. 84.
[125] ShN. 4. 235.
[126] YtZ. 25; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 57, pp. 73, 74; ShN. 3. 226; 4. 220; 5. 158, 288.
[127] AfrG. 7-13.

wish to hide herself in the heavens, or sink into the earth.[128] She discards libations offered by courtezans.[129] The angels Tishtrya and Verethraghna exhort the faithful not to allow unchaste women to share the sacrificial offerings consecrated in their honour, and declare that plagues and wars would desolate their country if they violated the injunctions.[130]

The texts speak with horror of a courtezan who lives a life of shame, and yields herself indiscriminately to the embraces of the Mazdayasnians and Daevayasnians, and states that the look of such a woman dries up the waters and plants and blights the earth; just as her touch demolishes the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds of a righteous person.[131] Ahura Mazda informs the prophet that such a shameless creature grieves him with the sorest grief, and pains him with the bitterest pain, and declares that she deserves to be killed, even more than gliding snakes and howling wolves.[132] Haoma is implored by his sacrificer to hurl his mace at such.[133]

**Abortion.** A man who defiled a virgin living in her parent's house, or with other guardians, whether she was betrothed or not, committed a serious crime against society. If the maiden conceived by him, it was his duty to support her, so that neither she nor her illegitimate offspring might suffer. If the child died before the birth, owing to the lack of support on the part of the man, he was to pay the penalty of wilful murder.[134] Any attempt of his to procure miscarriage was a fresh crime, as heavy as the first.[135] Life that is blossoming in the womb is as sacred as the one that later proceeds into the world at birth. The destruction of the fetus was, therefore, regarded as murder, and it was decreed that, if the guilty man and his victim arranged, with the help of an old woman, to procure abortion through drugs, in order to escape shame, all the three were guilty of wilful murder.[136]

**Unnatural crime.** The most heinous crime created by Angra Mainyu to plague human mortals is sodomy.[137] There is no expiation for the man who perpetrates the crime, no fine that he can pay and no penalty that he may suffer would remove his

[128] Yt. 17. 58.
[129] Yt. 17. 54, 57.
[130] Yt. 8. 59-61; 14. 51-53.
[131] Vd. 18. 62-64.
[132] Vd. 18. 61, 65.
[133] Ys. 9. 32.
[134] Vd. 15. 9, 13, 15-18.
[135] Vd. 15. 10.
[136] Vd. 15. 9-14.
[137] Vd. 1. 12.

guilt.[138] Even the man who is forced against his will to submit to the crime is to be scourged with eight hundred stripes with Aspa ashtraya and eight hundred with Sraosho charana.[139] The Avestan texts denounce the sodomite as a demon, a worshipper of the demons, a male paramour of the demons, a female paramour of the demons, a wife of the demons, as bad as a demon, through and through a demon, a demon during life and a demon after death.[140]

## Crimes against Property

**Inviolability of contracts.** Mithra, as an angel, is the genius of truth and guardian of good faith among men. When the term *mithra* is used as a common noun, it signifies contract. The Nikadum Nask, as we learn from the contents of the lost Avestan works, dealt with the questions of the binding nature of a contract, the good that resulted from its proper observance and the harm that followed its infringement.[141] We find, fortunately preserved in the extant Avestan texts, some material that gives us a vivid idea of the importance which the ancient Iranians attached to the fulfilment of contracts.

Ahura Mazda exhorts men through Zarathushtra never to break a contract, whether it is entered into with a believer or a non-believer, for a contract, we are told, holds good for all, irrespective of their faith.[142]

Besides the negotiating parties, who are directly involved in a transaction, contracts affect a large number of relatives, friends, and tribesmen, in proportion to the importance of a contract, or with reference to the nearness or remoteness of the degree of relationship between the contracting parties. If a compact made between two friends is twentyfold in value, it becomes fiftyfold, when it is between a husband and wife, and is declared to be a hundredfold between a father and a son. Similarly, the value is a thousandfold between two nations, and reaches the summit of ten thousand degrees, when it is made in connection with the religion of Mazda.[143]

The Vendidad furnishes us with instances showing the extent

[138] Vd. 8. 27, 28.
[139] Vd. 8. 26.
[140] Vd. 8. 31, 32.
[141] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 116, p. 82.
[142] Yt. 10. 2.
[143] Yt. 10. 116, 117.

of responsibility attached to the kinsmen of one violating a contract. Three hundred persons, we are informed, are liable to share the guilt of one who breaks the hand-contract. The scale rises with the greater enormity of the crime, and a thousand persons are held collectively responsible, to make good the harm done by a member of their clan who breaks the sixth or land-contract.[144]

**Forms of contract.** The texts recognize six distinct graded types of contract. The series opens with a contract in which the contracting parties promise, by word of mouth, to fulfil certain conditions, attached to the bargain which they have concluded. This preliminary contract is termed a word-contract. The second class, known as a 'hand-contract,' is satisfied, when the parties affirm their agreement by the striking of their hands. Agreement to forfeit to the lender the value of a sheep or an ox, in default of meeting his obligations, on the part of the debtor, constitutes the third and fourth contracts, known, respectively, as 'sheep-contract' and 'ox-contract.' When a man stands security for a party, it is termed a 'man-contract.' The last contract is the one called 'land-contract,' in which a piece of land, or its equivalent in value, is pawned by the debtor.[145]

**Punishment for the breach of contract.** One who does not fulfil his obligations, and breaks a contract, is called a thief of the contract.[146] He is believed to bring as much harm to his country as could a hundred evil-doers.[147]

The penalty for the breach of various contracts is scourging with stripes; the number ranging between three hundred to a thousand each by both of the two above-mentioned goads.[148]

**Theft and robbery.** The first section of the lost Dubasrujid Nask is said to have been devoted to the subject of thieves, their arrest, trial, and punishment.[149] The *tāyu*, 'thief,' and *hazanah*, 'robber,' were the constant disturbers of peace in the Iranian countries. They broke into cottages in the darkness of night, and carried away the household goods, or preyed upon the industrious agriculturists in large bands, looting their storage of corn and driving away their cattle. Hence, it is that we find the householder praying daily for protection against them.. It is

[144] Vd. 4. 5-10.
[145] Vd. 4. 1-4.
[146] Vd. 4. 1.
[147] Yt. 10. 2.
[148] Vd. 4. 11-16.
[149] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 1, pp. 89, 90.

in the darkness that thieves prowl about,[150] the light of the sun is a great deterrent to their wicked work, and the faithful invoke Hvare Khshaeta, the angel of light, to withstand thieves and robbers.[151] Haoma is implored to give a timely warning of the coming of a thief.[152] Rashnu, the angel of truth and justice, is called the destroyer of thieves and robbers.[153] There are spells to thwart the evil purpose of thieves.[154] It is the duty of the faithful to break the power of the marauding bands.[155] It is prayed that the fertilizing waters may not be for thieves.[156] Common interests, it is said, unite thieves and robbers in mutual relationship, and this unity enables them to carry on their vile profession with success.[157] Since it is for the good of society to break the bonds that unite thieves and robbers to one another, it is suggested that whenever it is not possible to catch a thief by usual means, temptation, and even deceit and other stratagems, are allowable to secure his arrest.[158]

When a thief was caught, he was generally confined in a house of detention, until he could be brought before a court of justice. On the day of his trial, when he was taken to the court, he was usually compelled to carry the things which he had stolen tied by his neck.[159] The owner of the property was summoned to the court, and had to prove his title to the stolen articles. Minors and women, occasionally arrested on the charge of theft, were accorded a special treatment. It happened sometimes that women charged with theft, and brought before the court, were pregnant and gave delivery to children in prison. The law prescribed humane treatment in such cases.[160] A man who did not steal himself, but instigated and helped others in accomplishing a theft, was held guilty of the crime.[161] Punishment for theft was inflicted, either by fine, imprisonment, or hard labour, or by branding.[162] The lost texts, we are informed, dis-

[150] Vd. 13. 47.
[151] Yt. 6. 4; Ny. 1. 14.
[152] Ys. 9. 21.
[153] Yt. 12. 8.
[154] Ys. 61. 3.
[155] Ys. 12. 2.
[156] Ys. 65. 8.
[157] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 122, p. 83.
[158] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 10, p. 92.
[159] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 123, p. 83.
[160] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 8, p. 92.
[161] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 8, 9, p. 92.
[162] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 46; 20. 5, pp. 72, 90, 91.

cussed in detail, also, the duration of the imprisonment inflicted for various offences.[163]

We learn from the contents of the lost Nasks that they treated the crime of theft under various subdivisions, such as of a thief who operates alone, as well as with accomplices;[164] of a theft jointly committed by three thieves at three different places;[165] of the status of the kinsmen of a thief, in a case of theft,[166] and of his defenders, who work for his release;[167] of the difference between a thief and a robber;[168] of the non-Iranian marauding tribesmen from the frontiers, who steal goods from Iranian settlements, and the prompt action required of the authorities for recapturing and restoring them to their owners;[169] of the conditions in which the restoration of plundered goods was to be considered satisfactory,[170] of the propriety of arresting a fellow citizen;[171] of a thief seriously wounding a person and escaping with stolen goods, who had hidden himself in the near vicinity, or had escaped so far from the place of the crime that his capture was hopeless;[172] of a thief who broke jail and escaped with outside assistance,[173] and of a person endeavouring to liberate a thief or a robber from fetters or imprisonment.[174]

## Crimes against the Person

**Assaults.** We gather from the contents of the lost Avestan Nasks that sections of the Nikadum Nask, called Zadmistana and Reshistana, were devoted to the laws touching assault.[175] The Vendidad preserves a list of different kinds of assault, and describes their corresponding punishments. If a man takes a weapon in his hand with the deliberate intention of injuring another, he is guilty of the first form of assault called *āgerepta*, 'stroke'; if he brandishes a weapon, he commits the crime of

[163] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 2, p. 90.
[164] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 7, p. 91.
[165] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19 49, p. 72.
[166] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 11, p. 92.
[167] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 14, p. 93.
[168] Dk, vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 12, p. 92.
[169] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 13, p. 93.
[170] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 137, p. 85.
[171] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 50, p. 73.
[172] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 20. 6, p. 91.
[173] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 18, p. 67.
[174] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 43, p. 71.
[175] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 1; 17. 1, pp. 41, 45, 46.

*avaoirishta,* 'blow'; if he actually wounds a person, his crime is an *aredusha,* 'wound'; for the inflicting of a deep wound, he is guilty of *xvara,* 'sore wound'; when bleeding results from the blow, he is responsible for the crime known as *tachat-vohunī,* 'bloody wound'; if his blow falls on a person so as to break a bone, he is sued for the crime of *astobid,* 'bone-breaking'; and when he strikes another with such great force that the injured person faints, he is to be punished for the crime of *frazā-baodhah,* 'rendering unconscious.'[176]

**Every repetition of a crime is met with a heavier punishment.** The penalty for committing any of the seven aforesaid assaults is a fine, and ten stripes, respectively, with the whip Aspa ashtraya, and an equal number with Sraosho charana. The maximum penalty in every case is the same, to wit, twice two hundred stripes each, with the two well known instruments. The number of the stripes inflicted depends upon the number of times a certain kind of assault has been committed. For example, a man guilty of the first, or lowest, form of assault receives the maximum punishment, when he commits the offence for the eighth time. One accused of the second form of assault is liable for the highest punishment on the seventh committal of the same crime. Similarly, one guilty of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth form of assault receives the extreme penalty on the sixth, fifth, fourth or third repetition of the crime. A person guilty of committing the last, or most aggravated, form of assault is punished with ninety strokes with each of the two whips, and receives the maximum penalty of twice two hundred stripes with each, if he is convicted for the second time. A man who impenitently persists in crime, and has already received the maximum penalty prescribed by the code of assaults, is held to be as an incorrigible criminal.[177]

The contents of the lost Nasks mention the different kinds of assault with slight variations.[178] Counter assaults are spoken of as being of eight different kinds.[179] By them assaults are differentiated according to the kinds of injuries inflicted. A crushing blow, we are informed, may occasion shrivelling of the

[176] Vd. 4. 17 ff.
[177] Vd. 4. 18 ff
[178] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 64, 65, p 75; vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 39, p. 24.
[179] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 146, p. 86.

body,[180] or may cause blood to flow, either by striking forcibly,[181] or by throwing a person down from a great height.[182] An assault may cause fright, swelling, unconsciousness, deafness or blindness, or may so injure some particular limb or organ of the body as to render it useless.[183]

Among the many questions discussed in the original texts, now lost, are the following: the different kinds of weapons used in assault;[184] assaults by adults as well as by minors;[185] murderous assaults committed by minors, and the responsibility of their parents for the crimes;[186] deliberate plots to assault;[187] the duty of a person who happens to know of a plot or conspiracy against another's life;[188] the duty of a man who sees a fellow-traveller killing another on a journey;[189] the duty of restraining an assailant, when one happens to meet two persons fighting, and the wrong of not interfering to prevent the assault upon the weaker party;[190] the duty of a man to help an injured party in securing compensation for wrong, as if he had himself been assaulted;[191] the authoritative requirement of shooting with an arrow at a murderer, who escapes and hides himself in a crowd;[192] the act of a wounded person who recovers by medicine, but later succumbs to his wounds, holding up some one in a place infested with noxious creatures,[193] assaults upon non-Zoroastrians and heretics,[194] and other varieties of murderous affrays.

## Crimes against Public Health

**Defilement and uncleanliness.** A man who neglects the rules of cleanliness laid down in the sacred texts, or who spreads the

[180] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 4, pp. 42, 43.
[181] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 2, pp. 41, 42.
[182] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 17. 2, p. 46.
[183] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 17. 4, pp. 46, 47.
[184] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 5; 17. 5, 6, pp. 43, 47, 48.
[185] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 21, p. 52.
[186] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 16. 10, p. 45.
[187] Dk., vol 15, bk. 8. 18. 26, 31; 19. 1, pp. 53, 62.
[188] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 2, p. 62.
[189] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 3, p. 62.
[190] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 57, p. 60.
[191] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 53, p. 59.
[192] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 62, p. 61.
[193] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 44, pp. 57, 58.
[194] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 147, 154, pp. 86, 87.

contagion of disease and death, endangers human life upon earth, and, therefore, should be punished. Fire, water, earth, and vegetation should not be defiled by dead matter, lest man should contract pollution and injure his health by contact with them. Consequently, most scrupulous care must be observed in the disposal of the dead, so that the corpse may not defile the elements, a person, or any other object, through which uncleanliness may spread. A man who violates the hygienic injunctions and buries the corpse of a man or a dog, and leaves it in the ground for six months, receives five hundred stripes with Aspa ashtrya and five hundred with Sraosho charana.[195] If he does not disinter the corpse for a year, the punishment is doubled; he becomes guilty of an inexpiable wrong, if he leaves it in the ground for two years.[196] On the death of a person, the faithful are enjoined to carry the corpse to the summit of a mountain, and there secure it with brass or stone. If one neglects to obey this injunction, and birds or dogs carry dead matter to waters and plants, thus occasioning danger to the living, he is to suffer the penalty of twice two hundred strokes.[197] It is a capital crime to carry a corpse alone.[198] Fire and ritual implements are to be removed from a house in which a man or a dog dies, and are not to be brought back until after nine nights in summer and one month in winter. Violation of this injunction is to be punished with two hundred stripes each with the two whips.[199] A piece of land whereon dogs or men have died should be kept fallow for a year before tilling it. Twice two hundred stripes are to be inflicted upon him who breaks this rule.[200] Upon the expiry of one year, the ground may be brought under cultivation, after carefully searching for, and removing, bones, hair, or any other kind of dead matter that may be lying there. Disregard of this rule makes the culprit liable to the penalty of two hundred stripes each with both the whips.[201] Between thirty and one thousand stripes are prescribed for throwing on the ground bones of various sizes of a dead dog, or of a dead man, from which grease or marrow flows. The list opens with the case of a bone of the size of the top joint of the little finger for which twice thirty strokes is the penalty, and rises, by grades, until the

[195] Vd. 3. 36.
[196] Vd. 3. 37-39.
[197] Vd. 6. 47, 48.
[198] Vd. 3. 14-20.
[199] Vd. 5. 43, 44.
[200] Vd. 6. 1-5.
[201] Vd. 6. 7-9.

maximum punishment is inflicted for throwing on the ground the whole body of a dead dog or of a dead man.[202] If a man happens to touch a corpse in the wilderness, it is his duty to come to an inhabited place, and seek purification from the first man whom he meets. If, however, without being so cleansed of his impurity, he touches water or trees, he is to undergo the penalty of four hundred stripes each with the two whips.[203] Vigour and health disappear from a place in which a man ignorant of the work of cleansing an unclean person, by means of ceremonial lustrations, undertakes to purify him.[204] Such false cleansers are declared enemies of public health, and are condemned to death.[205] From four hundred to one thousand blows, with the two whips are to be inflicted on a person who covers a dead body with unnecessary cloth, thereby hindering the quick consumption of the flesh by the corpse-eating dogs and birds, and spreading contagion of putrifying matter.[206] Suppression of the timely menses of a woman is punishable with twice two hundred stripes.[207] If a man have connection with a woman during her menstrual period, he receives thirty stripes with the two whips for the first offence, and the punishment rises to ninety strokes with a repetition of the crime for the fourth time.[208] In another place, it is said that he may atone for his guilt either by sacrificial offerings, by killing noxious creatures, by building thirty bridges over canals, or by undergoing the penalty of twice one thousand stripes.[209] Giving water to a woman who brings forth a still-born child is punishable with two hundred strokes with both the whips.[210]

### Crimes against Animals

**Penalty for cruelty to animals.** Ill-treatment of domestic animals is a crime punishable with flogging. Causing injury to a new horse, while catching him on a mountain, or pulling the tail of a horse, or an ox, upon which some one is riding, is a cruelty, and deserves to be punished.[211] Rigorous punishments are prescribed for those who ill-treat dogs. From fifty to two

[202] Vd. 6. 10-25.
[203] Vd. 8. 104-107.
[204] Vd. 9. 51-57.
[205] Vd. 9. 47-49.
[206] Vd. 8. 23-25.
[207] Vd. 16. 13.
[208] Vd. 16. 14-16.
[209] Vd. 18. 67-76.
[210] Vd. 7. 71, 72.
[211] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 40, 45, pp. 56, 58.

hundred stripes with the two whips are to be inflicted upon a person who gives bad food to various classes of dogs.[212] Punishment for killing one of the different kinds of dogs runs from five hundred to one thousand stripes with the horse goad, and an equal number with the punishing whip.[213] A man who refuses shelter to a bitch that is nearing her time, with the result that her young perish, is held liable to the penalty for wilful murder.[214] Seven hundred stripes with both the whips are prescribed for one who strikes such a bitch.[215] The most rigorous punishment, ten thousand blows with the two punishing whips, is prescribed for the murderer of a water dog.[216] The texts then give a detailed list of various redeeming works through which the culprit can atone for his crime. We are informed that the guilty person can expiate his wrong by carrying ten thousand loads of hard wood, or ten thousand loads of sweet-scented wood, to the fire; by offering ten thousand sacred Baresman twigs in ritual; by offering ten thousand libations to the waters; by killing ten thousand of each of some nine kinds of noxious creatures; by filling up ten thousand holes; by donating two complete sets of implements used for tending the fire, or a set of ritual implements, to a priest; or by the gift of war implements, or of agricultural tools; or by procuring a rill of running water for husbandmen; or by giving a piece of arable land to the pious; or by erecting a stable for oxen; or by the gifts of beds with sheets and cushions; by helping to contract marriage between two faithful people; by a present of cattle; by rearing and supporting twice seven whelps; by throwing the same number of bridges over canals; or by repairing eighteen stables that need repairs; by curing twice nine people of their diseases, or by feeding twice nine pious men with sumptuous food and drink.[217]

[212] Vd. 13. 24-27.
[213] Vd. 13. 4, 12-16.
[214] Vd. 15. 20-40.
[215] Vd. 15. 50, 51.
[216] Vd. 14. 1, 2.
[217] Vd. 14. 3-18.

## CHAPTER XIV

## PRIEST AND PRIESTHOOD

**The status of the priests in Iranian society.** From the analysis of the lost Nasks given in the Dinkard, we find that a section of the Hŭsparum, or seventeenth, Nask dealt with the profession of priesthood.[1] This has reached us in part, and is known as Aerpatistan, or the priestly code. Another lost Nask that treated of priesthood was Varshtmansra.[2] As we have already seen, the first of the four classes of Iranian society consisted of the priests. From his chief duty of tending the fire, the Zoroastrian priest is called *āthravan,* literally, the protector of fire. The high estimation in which the priestly class was held among the ancient Iranians is to be seen from the fact that athravan is one of the titles assumed by Ahura Mazda himself.[3] Similarly, when nature rejoices over the birth of Zarathushtra, it hails him as an athravan.[4] It is considered a mark of distinction to be possessed of the gifts of an athravan,[5] and a blessing to have sons of the disposition of an athravan.[6] The High Priest ranked second to the king in the empire. Marriage, as we have seen, being highly meritorious, and a special act of virtue, according to the teachings of the prophet, the priests never took monastic vows. They married and reared families, and held property just as did the laity.

It appears that, under certain circumstances women also worked as priestesses. So sacred a work as that of officiating as a *zaota,* or the chief priest, at a sacrificial ritual was not denied to their sex.[7]

**Hereditary succession becomes the rule of priesthood.** From the time of the division of society into four distinct classes,

[1] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 27. 1, pp. 12, 13.
[2] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 2. 2, p. 9.
[3] Yt. 1. 12.
[4] Yt. 13. 94.
[5] Yt. 19. 53.
[6] Ys. 10. 15.
[7] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 28. 6, p. 14.

the office of priest, it seems to us, became hereditary. We have already seen that, in the early stages of Iranian society, the religious life of a family centred around the hearth, and that the father acted as the family priest. On his death bed he handed over this sacred duty to his son, or to an adopted son, in case he was without male issue. Consequently, when society gradually expanded, and a special class came into existence, to which was assigned the task of watching over the spiritual welfare of the community, it was naturally thought that the sacerdotal traditions could best be safeguarded, and the priestly duties be most faithfully carried out, if they were handed down from father to son. Referring to the holy spells to which great potency for good or evil is ascribed, the Avestan texts provide that the secret knowledge of such formulas is to be imparted by a priest to his son or to his direct male descendants.[8]

**Graded ranks of the priests.** The sacred texts of this period give us the picture of a fully established priestly hierarchy. The head of the Zoroastrian priests of all Iran received his title from the name of the prophet, being called Zarathushtratema, or the Most Supreme Zoroaster, and is invoked in ceremonies.[9] The provincial high priest was generally designated *ratu,* 'spiritual lord,' as distinguished from *ahu,* or the temporal chief. In his capacity of a teacher, the priest was known as *aethra-paiti,* 'master of knowledge.' The priest who wielded authority in ritual and other matters, and prescribed punishments was called *sraoshāvarez,* 'master of rituals.' The sacred books speak of eight distinct functionaries who jointly conducted the sacrificial ceremonies, and rendered specific duties in ritual. These are *zaotar,* 'sacrificer,' *hāvanan,* 'the pounder of Haoma,' *ātra vakhsh,* 'tenderer of the fire,' *fraberetar,* 'carrier of things,' *āberetar,* 'bringer of things, *āsnatar,* 'cleanser,' *raethwishkara,* 'auxiliary priest,' and *sraoshāvarez,* 'master of rituals.'[10]

**Their qualifications.** The chief characteristics, also the qualifications of a priest were discussed in the lost Avestan Nasks.[11] Living on a simple and light fare, contentment and patience are among his necessary virtues.[12] Uprightness of character is in-

[8] Yt. 4. 10; 14. 46.
[9] Ys. 2. 6; 3. 8; 4. 11; 6. 5; 7. 8.
[10] Vsp. 3. 1; Yt. 24. 15; Vd. 5. 57, 58; 7. 17, 18; G. 3. 5.
[11] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 6. 4, p. 13; vol. 16, bk. 8. 27. 5, p. 13.
[12] Vd. 13. 45.

dispensable from him. He is to be the embodiment of holiness and of religious power. A ceremony, however elaborate it may be, is of no value and can not, in the least, rejoice the heavenly beings, if performed by a priest devoid of these qualifications.[13] Unremitting study of the sacred texts is his paramount duty. Ahura Mazda informs Zarathushtra that he is a real priest who remains awake through the night, seeking knowledge, and adds that he who sleeps through the night, without studying, and yet calls himself a priest, is a liar, and one falsely assuming the priestly office.[14] A true athravan and his dutiful disciples beg knowledge for themselves from Anahita.[15] The priests ask for a good memory from Chisti, the genius of religious wisdom.[16] Speaking of the prophet, Anahita calls him an athravan who has studied the sacred law, who is wise and clever, and whose very body is filled with religious spells.[17]

**Their functions.** The different classes of priests had their respective duties to perform.[18] All ceremonies, whether for the living or the dead, were performed by the priests. It was the athravan who invested a child with the sacred shirt and girdle, celebrated marriages, and recited the final prayers over the dead. He was a sacrificer in the fire-temple, a cleanser of the defiled, a healer of the sick, an exorciser of evil powers, an interpreter of dreams, a reader of stars, an educator of the youth, an administrator of justice, a scribe at the royal court, and a councillor of the king. Thus we find that the Iranian priest of this period monopolized all power and privilege. The priest was naturally the guardian of morals, and it is declared to be the duty of the High Priest to reclaim wrong-doers by admonitions, or to urge them to penitence for their misconduct.[19] It was he who brought succour to the needy, by raising subscriptions among the wealthy.[20] He travelled to distant lands to preach.[21] The only important work in which he was not engaged was warfare. When the entire male population was summoned to take up arms, in the time

[13] Yt. 10. 138, 139; 24. 12.
[14] Vd. 18. 5, 6.
[15] Yt. 5 86.
[16] Yt. 16. 17.
[17] Yt 5. 91.
[18] Dk., vol 15, bk. 8. 6. 5, 9, pp. 13, 14.
[19] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 6. 5, pp. 13, 14.
[20] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 6. 13, p. 15.
[21] Ys. 9. 24; 42. 6; Yt. 16. 17; 24. 17; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 27. 2, 4, 8, p. 13.

of war, the priests alone were exempted from military service.[22]

**Means of their livelihood.** The chief means of livelihood of the priests, occupied with ceremonial functions, came from the fees received from the laity for the performance of sacrificial rituals. The family priests received alms on festivals and on other auspicious occasions. The food and clothing, consecrated for ceremonial purposes, formed another source of income for the priests. The farmers, making offering of the first crop of the season to the genius of agriculture, gave the consecrated grain to them. The physicians who healed the sick, and the cleansers who purified the defiled, are specially enjoined to charge no fees for services to the priests, but to heal them solely to receive their blessings.[23]

There were evidently many resident priests in each of the great fire-temples. Seven hundred devotees, we are informed, were in the temple at Balkh, when Arejataspa marched in with his hosts and killed some eighty of the priests.[24] The founders of the temples usually set apart large estates and rich fields, for the maintenance of the fire and its votaries. Countless persons undertook long journies to visit annually, or at intervals, some of the important shrines, which had acquired a great fame for sanctity, with the pious object of winning religious merit for themselves. The priests attached to the temples recited prayers, and performed ceremonies, for these devout pilgrims, and received handsome fees from them. Most profitable of all, however, were the royal visits paid to these sacred spots on various occasions, as, for example, at the time of embarking upon a war or, more conspicuously, on the occasion of the king's triumphant return from war, when he lavished the most precious of the spoils on fire-temples. Thus, Kavi Haosravah celebrated his victories by enriching the fire-temple and showering gold and silver on the priests.[25]

**Implements and utensils in use of the priests.** Ritual appliances and instruments of punishment are listed among the proper priestly possessions. One of the modes of expiating a wrong was to present one set, or more, of such implements for ceremonial purposes.[26] As a wielder of authority in the admin-

[22] YtZ. 24.
[23] Vd. 7. 41; 9. 37.
[24] ShN. 5. 86, 92.
[25] ShN. 4. 255, 259, 269.
[26] Vd. 14. 6-8.

istration of justice, or in the supervision of ritual performances, the priest dealt out punishments to the wrong-doers. These punishing whips of the priest are the well known *Sraosho charana* and *Aspa ashtrya* or the goad.[27] An important form of punishment for criminals prescribed in the Vendidad, was destroying a certain number of noxious creatures. From its close association with the priestly judge, the weapon called *khrafstraghna,* 'the smiter of noxious creatures,' was regarded as an instrument of the priests.[28]

The chief utensils in daily use by the priests at the sacrificial rites, even to this day, are the mortar, made either of stone or of iron,[29] cups,[30] and trays made of silver, gold or other metals to hold and strain Haoma juice.[31]

As the custodians of the fire, the priests, needed ladles and tongs, also axes and saws, to prepare wood.[32]

Among priestly implements proper may be mentioned knives, spoons, and other articles, used in ablution ceremonies. An important duty of a priest was, as it is to the present day, to cleanse a defiled person by elaborate ablution rites. A metal knife is required to draw the furrows upon the ground according to the prescribed rules.[33] The purifying liquid is to be given at intervals, according to specified rules, in such a way that the priest does not come in contact with the defiled person. Therefore, a wooden stick which has nine knots, with a brass or lead spoon tied to one end of it, is held by the priest, so that he can sprinkle the cleansing liquid upon the unclean person from a safe distance.[34]

[27] Vd. 14. 8; 18. 4.
[28] Vd. 14. 8; 18. 2.
[29] Ys. 22. 2; 24. 2; 25. 2; Vsp. 10. 2; 11. 2, 4, 18; 12. 5.
[30] Vd. 5. 39; 14. 8; 19. 9.
[31] Ys. 10. 17; Vsp. 10 2; 11. 18.
[32] Vd. 14. 7.
[33] Vd. 9. 10.
[34] Vd. 9. 14.

## CHAPTER XV

## WARRIORS AND WARFARE

**Greatness of the profession of the warriors.** The second class in the general division of Iranian society is that of the warriors. The king himself was its head, and the chiefs and nobles were included in it. The profession of the warrior was held in high esteem, and the great achievements of the heroes were sung by the bards and poets from house to house. Iranian parents, as we have seen, prayed oftenest for sons, but the sons that they longed for were men of heroic mould, who could fight for their homes and extend their borders. Women who were mothers of many heroic sons received special glorification.[1] The highest life ambition for the Iranian youth was to be a hero of many battles. Special training in the art of war was, therefore, given to youths, and they were inured to fatigue by rigorous discipline.

**The nation as the empire's army.** The standing army, composed of men who had chosen the profession of warfare as a means of livelihood, was limited as to numbers, and served the country's need in times of peace. When, however, the country was engaged in war, the entire male population, with the exception of the priests, had to take up arms. The priests alone were exempt from military service for all time, whereas men of other classes, engaged in various occupations in ordinary times, were obliged to leave their respective labours, when the king's men, with beat of drum, announced the outbreak of war. Agriculturists and artisans alike were then drafted into the army. When Arejataspa threatened Iran with invasion, King Vishtaspa issued a proclamation that all men between the age of ten and eighty should rally for the defence of the country, and threatened capital punishment for the defaulters.[2] From this royal proclamation we learn that the division of society into four classes, on

[1] Ys. 1. 6; 2. 6; 3. 8; Vsp. 1. 5; Yt. 2. 5, 10; G. 4. 10.
[2] YtZ. 24, 25.

the basis of their various occupations, held good in the time of peace only, and that the members of the different groups united into one whole nation at arms, as soon as the country entered into war. Professional troops, maintained by the king, were, to a considerable extent composed of men of the frontier tribes. These mercenaries deserted the king, if higher and better prospects of booty were promised by the enemy.

**Divine aid invoked in war.** In time of war, as in time of peace, religion exerted strong influence upon the ancient Iranians. The victory or defeat was generally attributed to the favour or disfavour of the heavenly beings. Consequently, divine blessings were invoked at every stage of the war for the triumph of their arms. We gather from the contents of one of the lost Nasks that officiating priests, with ceremonial appliances, accompanied the fighting armies to the battlefield. They invoked divine help for their armies, and pronounced imprecations against the enemy. The text speaks of the performance of the Yasna sacrifice on the day of battle, the consecration of the waters found nearest to the locality in which the battle was to be fought; the offering of libations; the recital of the Avestan formulas during the period of fighting, and at the time of discharging the first arrow on the enemy.[3] We glean from the Shah Namah that mighty kings and valiant heroes, setting aside their crowns and armour, joined the priests in prayers to God for help, before launching their attack on the enemy; or bent their knees, in the thick of battle, asking divine help to extricate themselves from embarrassing situations; or offered praise and thanksgiving at the triumphant close of the war.[4]

The chief patron of war, according to Avestan texts, was Mithra, whom the kings propitiated with offerings, when they made warlike preparations.[5] This angel was believed to come, forthwith, to the succour of his invoker; to breathe courage into the fighting armies; to spread consternation among the hostile hordes; to render their weapons ineffective; to break their lines asunder, and to put them to rout.[6]

The Guardian Spirits of the dead are other willing helpers, who

[3] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 24, p. 9.
[4] ShN. 2. 73, 75, 167, 171, 172; 3. 247, 281; 4. 49, 50, 127, 208, 209, 234, 255, 258, 259, 269, 270; 5. 103.
[5] Yt. 10. 8.
[6] Yt. 10. 36, 39, 40, 43, 48, 101.

can bring divine help to the warriors who invoke them. Therefore, chiefs and heroes looked to them as allies against their foes.[7] Their help, however, was extended only to those who fought for a just cause.[8] Like winged birds, they came flying to the battlefield, protected their invokers against the enemy,[9] and mowed down the hostile hordes.[10] The sword of the enemy, we read in the sacred texts, cuts not, his club strikes not, his arrow hits not, and his spear pierces not the favoured one whom the Fravashis watch and shield.[11] The victor who pursues his foe, and the vanquished who flees from the field, ask from them swiftness in running.[12] Inspired by the conviction that the celestial beings who protect their country, and the ancestral dead who still watch their actions, are on their side, invisibly fighting their battles, the soldiers in Ancient Iran marched to the battlefield full of the hope of victory.

**Astrologers consulted to predict the result of the war.** As the people strongly believed in the influence of the stars upon man's doings, it was only natural that the kings should consult the court astrologers upon the fortune of their country, before embarking upon a war. When Vishtaspa, for example, made warlike preparations to meet Arejataspa upon the battlefield, he asked Jamaspa to read the stars, and acquaint him with the ultimate result of the war. The wise diviner calculated the stars, and described in detail how various mighty heroes would proceed to encounter their foes, how fate would go against them, and deprive the royal family of no less than twenty-three heroes, who would perish in the war.[13] The warriors themselves often dreaded the evil consequences foretold by the astrologers. Thus, for example, told Gudarz, in the midst of a battle, that the diviner had revealed to him the secret that, no matter how heroically the Iranian armies would fight, the ultimate victory rested with the enemy.[14] Similarly, on one occasion, Rustam spoke to his comrades of the coming events of the battle as told by his astrologer, but urged them to have no misgivings.[15]

**Causes that led to war.** The sword was generally the chief arbiter between the Iranians and their hostile neighbours. Wars

[7] Yt. 13 23, 27, 40.
[8] Yt. 13. 39, 47.
[9] Yt. 13. 70.
[10] Yt. 13. 48.
[11] Yt. 13. 71, 72.
[12] Yt. 13. 35.
[13] YtZ. 39, 46-49; ShN. 5. 48-53.
[14] ShN. 3. 127.
[15] ShN. 3. 219.

were generally occasioned by the desire for conquest of new lands; for the sake of defending their country against the aggression of a powerful enemy; for punishing the marauding tribes who made frequent raids upon Iranian settlements, or for avenging the blood of a royal person. Very many years of the reign of a king were usually occupied in warfare, and the heritage of vengeance upon an enemy was often bequeathed to his successor. The Iranian prince Syavarshan fell a victim to the intrigue of the brother of the Turanian king Franrasyan, and this unfortunate incident involved the two countries in a war of long duration. When King Kavi Usa resigned the throne in his old age, in favour of his grandson Haosravah, the son of the murdered prince Syavarshan, he caused the young king to swear, in the presence of warrior chiefs, that the wreaking of vengeance upon the ruling house of Turan should be his chief object in life.[16] When Haosravah later fought with the son of Franrasyan, he informed him that he had not come to the plain for throne or signet-ring, but to avenge his father,[17] and reiterated his unflinching resolve on different occasions.[18] Rustam avowed that he would not rest until he avenged the murder of the prince,[19] and in reply to the offers of the enemy to conclude peace, declared with Giv that the only way to terminate the hostilities was that the Turanians should hand over in bonds to the Iranian king all those who were guilty of the blood of Syavarshan.[20] Similarly, when Asfandiyar fell in the unfortunate encounter with Rustam, which the great hero tried his utmost to avert, the heritage of vengeance descended to his son Bahman, who, on coming to the throne, made war upon Rustam's family, for the hero himself was dead at that time; marched against Zabulistan, and defeated and killed Framraz, the son of Rustam.[21]

**Weapons of war.** As a mode of expiation of one's crime of killing a water-dog, the Vendidad enjoins giving as a pious gift the chief implements of war to a warrior, incidentally mentioning among them the javelin, sword, mace, bow and arrow, sling and sling-stone.[22] By far the most renowned weapon, however, was the mace. It is spoken of as the strongest and most victorious of all weapons.[23] It is the weapon wielded by the angels

[16] ShN. 3. 21, 22.
[17] ShN. 4. 172.
[18] ShN. 4. 252.
[19] ShN. 2. 338, 339.
[20] ShN. 3. 197, 198, 205; 4. 17, 18.
[21] ShN. 5. 283-285.
[22] Vd. 14. 9.
[23] Yt. 10. 132.

Mithra and Sraosha, when fighting the demons.[24] The mace was made of iron, brass, steel or even of gold.[25] The ox-head club, to which we have had occasion to refer, continues to be most commonly used during this period.[26] The other variety of the mace seems to be one with several knots. Mithra's mace is said to have as many as a hundred knots.[27] The mace was specially used by mounted warriors, who carried it hanging by the side of the saddle, when not engaged in active fighting.[28]

The sword was another important weapon used by both infantry and cavalry. Flashing swords of two edges;[29] swords with watered blades,[30] and those with golden handles, inlaid with precious stones,[31] or with golden sheaths,[32] are mentioned. We learn from the Shah Namah that the swords mostly used were of Indian make.[33]

Among the weapons used for offensive purposes was the long, well-whetted spear.[34] A passage in the Shah Namah speaks of the length of a spear as nine cubits.[35] The spear was a long wooden shaft with a steel point at the head.[36]

Bows and arrows were most freely used to fight the enemy from a distance.[37] The bow was made of wood that could bend well.[38] Poplar was often used for bows and shafts, although tamarisk, and other kinds of wood, are mentioned for the same purpose.[39] Reference is found to shafts made of horn.[40] The string was of cowgut,[41] or of deer-hide,[42] and is described as making a whistling sound at the discharge of an arrow.[43]

The arrow had feathers of falcon, vulture or eagle attached

[24] Ys. 57. 10, 16; Yt. 6. 5; 10, 96, 101, 132; 11. 10, 11; Vd. 18. 30 ff.
[25] Yt. 10. 96, 131; ShN. 5. 53, 110.
[26] ShN. 3. 224, 225; 4. 292; 5. 109, 110, 223.
[27] Yt. 10. 96.
[28] ShN. 2. 83; 3. 326; 5. 109.
[29] Yt. 5. 130; 10. 131.
[30] ShN. 5. 107.
[31] Yt. 14. 27.
[32] ShN. 5. 304.
[33] ShN. 2. 111, 373; 3. 34; 4. 268.
[34] Yt. 10. 39, 102; 15. 48; 17. 12; YtZ. 28.
[35] ShN. 4. 148.
[36] ShN. 5. 305.
[37] YtZ. 28.
[38] Yt. 10. 39.
[39] ShN. 2. 247; 3. 181, 227, 246; 4. 48, 101, 107; 5. 239, 240, 244.
[40] Yt. 10. 129.
[41] Yt. 10. 128.
[42] ShN. 3. 181.
[43] Yt. 10. 113.

to its end.[44] The Shah Namah speaks of an arrow with three or four feathers.[45] The shaft had a sharp point at the head, resembling a willow leaf,[46] of brass,[47] or of steel.[48]

When the warrior marched to the field of battle, he flung the bow upon his arm, and struck the arrows in his belt.[49] While shooting, the archer set his thumbstall to the string, straightened the left arm, and curved the right arm.[50]

We learn from the Shah Namah that great heroes, like Rustam, constantly used a lasso to pull an enemy from his horse. The lasso was made of leather thongs,[51] and was of considerable length. When a warrior prepared for the field, he coiled the lasso, and hung it to his saddlebow, or put it in the straps.[52] We obtain some idea of the great length of the lasso, when we read that it required sometimes as many as sixty turns to coil it.[53]

Scimitars and javelins, daggers and falchions, are among the more important of the other weapons of attack known to the early Iranians.[54]

**Defensive arms.** Warriors covered their bodies with heavy armour, when they went to fight.[55] The head was usually protected by a helmet made of wolf-skin,[56] of steel,[57] or of gold,[58] and extended down to protect the face, with a gorget, to cover the neck, linked to it.[59] The other essential piece of armour, the cuirass, covered the body between the neck and the girdle. A cuirass made of the skin of a tiger was the favourite armour of Rustam.[60] Shields,[61] breastplates and coats of mail of metal were in general use.[62]

[44] Yt. 10 39, 101, 129; ShN. 3. 181.
[45] ShN. 2. 266; 3. 181; 5. 239, 240.
[46] ShN. 2. 354.
[47] Yt. 10. 129.
[48] ShN. 4. 48.
[49] ShN. 2. 267; 3. 179.
[50] ShN. 3. 181.
[51] ShN. 2. 116, 339.
[52] ShN. 2. 61, 66, 96, 116, 133; 3. 32, 34, 47, 188; 5. 67, 111.
[53] ShN. 2. 66.
[54] ShN. 2. 15, 96, 148; 3. 302; 4. 98; 5. 126.
[55] YtZ. 28; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 6, p. 7.
[56] ShN. 4. 84, 104.
[57] Yt. 13. 45; ShN. 5. 69.
[58] Yt. 15. 57; ShN. 2. 219.
[59] ShN. 3. 61.
[60] ShN. 2. 52, 53, 57, 111, 121, 161, 168; 3. 278; 5. 220, 222, 234.
[61] Yt. 13. 35; 19. 54.
[62] ShN. 2. 198: 3. 69; 4. 39, 172, 295; 5. 69, 223, 234.

**Chariots.** The second, or the warrior, class derives its name from the Indo-Iranian word *ratha,* 'a chariot,' and was called *rathaeshtār,* literally, 'one who stands in a chariot.' Though the warriors received their class designation from this two-wheeled vehicle, we find in neither the Avesta or the Shah Namah that it was much used in war by the Kianian people. The warriors generally fought on foot, or mounted on horses or elephants. However, the chariot was a desired possession, and we learn that, when Mithra is propitiated, he bestows beautiful chariots upon the owner of the house.[63] Similarly, Anahita gives kingdoms full of sounding chariots.[64] The chariot is mentioned in the Avestan texts, mostly in connection with the angels. Anahita, Drvaspa, Mithra, Sraosha, and Parendi have their chariots.[65]

**Flags and banners.** The display of flags and banners of different colours, and bearing various designs, was the conspicuous feature, when troops marched from the cities for the battle front. The renowned banner known as the Kawa's flag, dating from the first Iranian dynasty, still continued to be the royal standard of Iran. It was in the special custody of the chief of the army,[66] and led the soldiers to the fight.[67] It was hoisted in the centre of the fighting armies, near the enclosures of the king and commander of the troops.[68] Sometimes the flag was hoisted upon the back of an elephant to enable the armies to behold it from a distance.[69] The royal standard was the symbol of the country's honour and greatness, and the poet depicts the enemies longing to capture it in the thick of the battle, because they thought that its loss would darken the daylight to the Iranians.[70] Besides this royal standard, each hero had his own flag of different colour and design. Red, yellow, black, violet and the other hues of the various flags, designated the different camp enclosures of the several chiefs.[71] These flags bore such emblems as a lion, tiger, wolf, gazelle, boar, eagle, dragon, elephant and

[63] Yt. 10. 30.
[64] Yt. 5. 130.
[65] Ys. 57. 27; Yt. 5. 11; 9. 2; 10. 52, 66-68, 76, 124, 125; Sr. 1. 25; 2. 25.
[66] ShN. 2. 154, 406; 3. 38, 39, 84, 92; 4. 146.
[67] ShN. 2. 341, 349.
[68] ShN. 2. 402; 3. 89; 4. 25, 226, 292.
[69] ShN. 5. 59.
[70] ShN. 3. 93, 135.
[71] ShN. 2. 283; 3. 33.

moon.[72] When a hero left his camp to encounter his foe, his banner was carried with him.[73]

**The playing of various instruments, an accompaniment of all warlike movements.** When war was declared with an enemy, the people were informed of it by the sound of the brazen trumpets.[74] The scouts carried the news to the warriors and chiefs outside the capital city, and the royal courtyard soon began to be filled in with the armies pouring in from near and distant lands, amid the blare of trumpets, the playing of flutes and the beating of drums.[75] The forces were then arranged according to requirements, and drums and tymbals were mounted on elephants.[76] When the warlike preparations were completed, the army was inspected by the king. The troops marched past the king and left the city, amid the blare of trumpets, the din of tymbals and Indian bells, the blast of clarions, the roll of kettle-drums, the sounding of pipes, and the clashing of cymbals.[77] The army marched on the way to the sound of drums and trumpets, and encamped on the battlefield. On the sight of the enemy, the fifes and drums were struck and the trumpets blared, the gongs and bells were sounded, and the cymbals beat, as a signal for the army to attack.[78] The news of the fall of a hostile hero in single combat or of the defeat of the enemy, which ran through the armies like wildfire, amid the roar of the warriors that rent the air, at once occasioned the sounding of drums and trumps, kettle-drums, gongs and bells.[79]

**Food and equipment.** As large numbers of soldiers marched to battle, elaborate arrangements were required for carrying provisions, food and fodder for men and animals. The Dinkard mentions chapters of the lost Nasks which treated the matter of daily rations, including bread, milk and meat for the men, and fodder for the horses.[80] In times of need, when the army was short of food on the battlefield, the soldiers were compelled to slay and eat their horses.[81] The lost texts, we are informed,

[72] ShN. 2. 155; 3. 33-35, 157; 4. 321; 5. 115, 151.
[73] ShN. 2. 161; 4. 171.
[74] ShN. 2. 142.
[75] YtZ. 26.
[76] ShN. 2. 148, 227, 402; 3. 31, 334; 5. 45.
[77] ShN. 2. 38, 93; 3. 25, 31, 38, 68; 4. 13; 5. 276.
[78] ShN. 3. 177, 223; 4. 22.
[79] ShN. 3. 228, 230, 264.
[80] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 2, 10, 12, pp. 7, 8.
[81] ShN. 3. 71.

dealt with the means employed, when the army had lost its food supply, and, on its march, reached a place where there was enough food and pasture [82]

**The army.** On the outbreak of war, the king was generally able to gather to his banner an army numbering several thousand horse and foot. When the army marched to the battlefield, an immense amount of material followed in its rear. The army encamped at some favourable place, and tents of various colours, pavilions, and camp enclosures sometimes extended for several miles.[83] The royal tent was generally furnished with several apartments, lined with costly materials, and decorated with exquisite designs. If the king came to the battlefield, he retained the chief command for himself, and the royal pavilion was pitched in the centre of the camp.[84] On such occasions, the chief of the army was the next in command to the king. Sometimes the king did not engage personally in fighting, but watched and guided the battle from a mountain summit or from his elephant.[85] When the king did not accompany the army, he gave his signet-ring, as a mark of authority, to the hero whom he had appointed to supreme command.[86] The royal Kawa banner, under such circumstances, remained in charge of this hero, and was hoisted before his tent.[87] The advance and rear guards, the wings and the centre of the post, were under command of tried and trusted warriors. These distinguished leaders wore golden boots, as a mark of honour.[88] The army was composed of vast numbers of soldiers who fought on foot, as well as on horseback. Special training was imparted to the cavalry soldiers before they were led to battle.[89] The Avestan texts speak of the heroes fighting on horseback.[90] According to the Shah Namah, a large cavalry force was the prominent feature of the Iranian army.[91] The archers were generally stationed in towers fixed upon elephants, and darted their arrows upon the enemy from these raised seats.[92]

[82] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 21. 6, p. 94.
[83] ShN. 2. 148, 153; 3. 69, 71; 4. 291, 292; 5. 115, 137.
[84] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 9, p. 7; ShN. 2. 70, 149, 153.
[85] YtZ. 69.
[86] ShN. 3. 39.
[87] ShN. 3. 48; 4. 300.
[88] ShN. 2. 167, 406; 3. 32, 38, 84, 86, 126, 302; 4. 146, 180, 282, 300.
[89] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 3, p. 7.
[90] Yt. 5. 117; 10. 42, 47.
[91] ShN. 2. 226; 4. 13; 5. 55, 56.
[92] ShN. 4. 147, 179.

**Military discipline.** A number of men who are physically strong may fight with weapons in hand like a mob; it is discipline alone that makes them fight like a regular, trained army. The Dinkard mentions treatises that contained advice and admonitions to soldiers.[93] Strict discipline was enforced upon all ranks in the army. The army was well organized, and trained officers of graded ranks, with their functions and powers definitely regulated, were given command of fixed numbers of soldiers.[94] The position of a commanding officer involved grave responsibilities. Even the chief in command was at times degraded from his post, and openly disgraced for miscarriage of duty.[95] The officer in charge of a regiment was expected to be able to recognize the worth of his men severally, and to gauge the relative strength of his own army with that of the enemy.[96] Obedience to their commanders, utter disregard of death, cheerful resignation on the battlefield, and the hope of reward in the next world were inculcated in the soldiers.[97] One who showed any sign of cowardice on the field of battle was compelled to don a peculiar cap, as a mark of ignominy. The man who turned his back upon the battlefield, and fled before the enemy, was put in bonds and heavily punished.[98] Corporal punishment was meted out to soldiers for any breach of discipline.[99] Those in command were advised to supply such information to the troops as would keep them cheerful and lively and to refrain from giving out news likely to depress the spirits or create panic among their men.[100]

In the case of an emergency, when the army found itself short of horses on the battlefield, it was considered proper for the soldiers to seize horses grazing in adjoining fields, and to utilize them for fighting purpose.[101]

**Payments and gifts to the army.** We have already noticed that the entire male population was summoned to take up arms against a foe, when the country went to war. Besides the army recruited in this manner, there were mercenary troops, employed

[93] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 22, p. 9.
[94] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 7, p. 7.
[95] ShN. 3. 84-87.
[96] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 15, 16, p. 8.
[97] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 14, p. 8.
[98] ShN. 3. 226.
[99] ShN. 3. 46.
[100] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 23, p. 9.
[101] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 18, p. 8.

to fight for the country. We gather from the Shah Namah that the general method of paying soldiers for their services on such occasions was to allow them one full year's pay in advance, when they joined the army.[102] Later, if the army won a victory over the enemy, the soldiers received their share of the booty.[103] Recognition of valorous deeds of warrior champions and heroic chiefs was always most liberal.[104] Rich jewels and treasures, crowns, thrones, silks, brocades, elephants, horses, camels, slaves, lands, and provinces, were among the royal gifts bestowed upon those who had established their claim to reward by their heroic achievements.[105] Sometimes the king announced the awards beforehand; set prices on the heads of enemies, and handed over the prizes to those who undertook to carry out the royal behests.[106] When Vishtaspa was confronted with reverses in his battle against Arejataspa, we see him publicly declaring, that he would give away his own daughter in marriage to the hero who would avenge the Iranian blood upon the enemy.[107]

**Scouts and watchmen.** These were stationed in time of peace over garrisons and fortresses to watch against the intrusion of doubtful persons from abroad, and in time of war to spy upon the movements of the enemy and give information to the army.[108] Outpost guards remained in the watch-towers or on mountain tops, where they could detect the secret doings of the enemy.[109] During the night, they announced the coming of the enemy by beaconfires on the hills. When the guards saw anyone approaching, they challenged him, and if the person returned the shout and satisfied them that he did not belong to the hostile party, he was allowed to proceed.[110] If a spy was detected stalking round the camp in the dark, he was killed on the spot. Negligence of duty on the part of the watchmen was punishable by bodily chastisement or death, according to the gravity of the offence and its consequences.[111]

[102] ShN. 4. 145, 258; 5. 47, 276, 6. 35.
[103] ShN. 2. 75; 3 248, 266; 4. 211, 228.
[104] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25 8, p. 7.
[105] ShN. 2. 21; 3. 241, 356; 4 129, 217, 236; 5. 75.
[106] ShN. 3. 26-28, 291.
[107] YtZ. 77.
[108] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 19, p. 8; ShN. 3. 73, 75; 4. 32, 150; 5. 54, 182, 183.
[109] ShN. 3. 83, 133; 4. 25, 52, 53, 150.
[110] ShN. 2. 151; 4. 225.
[111] ShN. 3. 234, 235.

**Single combats generally preceded mass attack.** When the army was camped at a reasonable distance from that of the enemy, the hostile movement generally began in the following manner. A hero from the troops advanced towards the enemy post and challenged the enemy to send forth a champion to meet him in single combat.[112] This mode of fighting singly is mentioned as the good old custom of Iran.[113] When the challenge was accepted, it was agreed that none should interfere between the two combatants from the hostile hosts.[114] The combatants generally withdrew to some distance from the belligerent armies, each taking an umpire with him. It was then mutually resolved that no harm should be done to the umpires, and that the victor should spare the life of the fallen, so that he might be able to carry the news of the defeat of the hero to his army.[115] At times, a fixed number of the picked warriors of one party were matched against an equal number of the enemy.[116] The main armies, on such occasions, watched the conflict between the champions thus chosen for their respective countries. If no decisive result came by fighting with one kind of weapon, they changed them. Thus we see champions successively fighting with arrows and maces, swords and spears, until the one or the other party was defeated.[117] Another favourite device of the Iranian hero was to uncoil his lasso and fling it over his opponent, catching him in its coil. The aim was generally so accurate that the head or the waist of the enemy was caught in the coil, and he was forcibly dragged, falling from his horse or elephant, a helpless captive in the hands of the hero.[118]

When weapons proved of no avail, the combatants agreed to wrestling, though it was regarded as derogatory for a king to enter into such a struggle.[119] The wrestler aimed to lift his adversary from the ground, or with dexterous movements forwards and backwards to throw him with the weight of the body.[120] It was contrary to the laws of chivalry to kill the enemy the first time he fell to the ground. When Sorab hurled Rustam on the ground, and drew his dagger to cut off his head, the veteran hero

[112] ShN. 2. 71, 113, 114; 3. 177, 179, 180, 187, 249; 5. 63, 223.
[113] ShN. 2. 166.
[114] ShN. 3. 262; 4. 173.
[115] ShN. 4. 48.
[116] ShN. 4. 95-98.
[117] ShN. 2. 162, 163; 3. 70, 101; 4. 48; 5. 225.
[118] ShN. 2. 385; 3. 102, 103, 189, 230.
[119] ShN. 4. 174.
[120] ShN. 2. 170, 172, 173; 3. 263, 264.

told the youthful warrior that, according to the ancient custom of his country, the second fall of a combatant always decided the victory, and that, therefore, they should engage in one more contest.[121] When no decisive result followed a day's struggle, the combat was deferred until the following day by mutual consent.

Though the hostile armies agreed to abide by the result of single combats, they were usually followed by a general engagement, in which the soldiers of both armies fell upon one another and fought to the finish.

**Treatment allotted to the vanquished enemy.** When the hostile chiefs acknowledged their defeat, and sued for quarter, their lives and property were saved.[122] If the enemy king was captured alive, he was permitted a good residence to live in,[123] and the females of his royal court were treated with respect.[124] If the hostile king was slain on the battlefield, his corpse was given a final resting-place with all honour due to his august position.[125] Sometimes enemy persons of royal birth were taken as hostages to Iran, and held as security for a treaty not to create trouble in future.[126] Harsh measures, however, were adopted toward an enemy who had been a source of great menace to the country, and who was subjugated after a great sacrifice of life and labour. His country was given to pillage;[127] or put to the flames.[128] A dangerous hostile king was put in bonds.[129] According to the Yatkar-i Zariran when Spentodata defeated and captured Arejat-aspa, the arch-enemy of the new faith, he cut off a hand, a leg, and an ear, and burned an eye of the enemy king; set him on a donkey whose tail was chopped off, and sent him back to his country in humiliation.[130] When the heroes encountered rivals in single combat, or in mass attack, and happened to kill them, they generally cut off their heads and carried or sent them to their king.[131]

[121] ShN. 2. 170.
[122] ShN. 4. 125, 131, 132.
[123] ShN. 3. 240.
[124] ShN. 4. 213-216, 232, 233; 5. 162.
[125] ShN. 4. 128, 176, 243.
[126] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 25-27, p. 10; ShN. 2. 240, 241, 243; 4. 233, 235.
[127] ShN. 2. 39, 75, 135, 357, 362; 3. 238, 248, 266; 4. 211, 243, 254; 5. 158, 161, 289.
[128] ShN. 2. 343.
[129] Yt. 19. 77.
[130] YtZ. 67, 113.
[131] ShN. 3. 70, 74; 4. 50, 52, 101, 126, 185; 5. 70.

## CHAPTER XVI

## AGRICULTURISTS AND AGRICULTURE

**Excellence of husbandry.** Kianian Iran was pre-eminently an agricultural country and agriculture was the staple occupation of the people. Hence the third class of Iranian society, composed of husbandmen, was the most numerous. Ahura Mazda, it is said, created his prophet for the support and care of the tillers of the land.[1] Zarathushtra leads mankind to choose the husbandman as the promoter of the world's progress, as against the marauding nomad who hinders it.[2] Civilization begins when man learns to appreciate the value of a fixed abode for himself and his family; when he is attached to the soil, and when the sense of individual property is fostered in him. Nature had not fortified the Iranian settlements against the periodical intrusion of the nomads, who descended from the Steppes of Turkestan, or emerged from the marshy lands of Gilan and Mazandaran. These, wandering in search of pasture for their cattle, often raided the Iranian settlements, and carried away rich booty in grain and livestock. They were the enemies of all human progress, and the prophet inveighs against them in his sacred songs. The husbandman, on the other hand, is described as a watchful and diligent person; sleeping little; the first to leave his house at the break of day, the last to enter it in the evening; toiling hard from dawn till dark, and furthering human happiness.[3]

Zarathushtra teaches man the value of settled life, and shows him the advantages of the settled pursuit of agriculture, which enables him to increase his early possessions and prosper, and gives him an opportunity to develop the social virtues. Frequent sowing of corn is said to feed and fatten the religion of Mazda.[4] The man who diligently sows corn, sows righteousness. He strengthens religion to progress with the feet of a hundred men; nourishes it with the milk of a thousand women's breasts, and

[1] Ys. 29. 6.
[2] Ys. 31. 9, 10.
[3] Vd. 13. 46.
[4] Vd. 3. 30.

celebrates its praise by a thousand sacrificial formulas.[5] Angra Mainyu plans want and misery, to thwart man's life upon earth. The farmer who grows crops, and feeds hungry mouths, and enables people to lead an active life, curbs the power of the arch-enemy of man. The demons, it is said, start and sweat, cough and faint, flee and fly, and scorch their jaws, when barley grows and is pounded, and the flour is kneaded for bread.[6]

The man who irrigates and fertilizes the fallow land, and transforms marshy regions into fruitful fields, makes the land happy.[7] Unhappy is the land that long remains uncultivated.[8] The earth blesses with prosperity him who tills it; but its curse upon the man who does not cultivate it, is that he may have to beg his bread at the doors of others.[9]

**Farming agencies.** The texts speak of the different grades of ownership in land.[10] Individuals might own the fields and farms, which they tilled with their own hands, and raise crops sufficient to support their families. Several persons often combined in partnership to cultivate extensive areas. Feudal chiefs, and large estate holders, leased lands to small tenant-farmers, who cultivated them for a stipulated fixed share of the crop. There were elaborate rules to regulate the working of joint husbandry between partners, and the relations between landlords and the tenant cultivators.[11] Princes, nobles, and feudal chiefs employed slaves to cultivate their lands.

Both the male and female members of a family, and even the children, had their duties on the farm work. The men took upon themselves the hard work of turning up the sod with spades to prepare the ground for planting crops, of breaking the clods of earth or of hoeing; and women and children did the cleaning and weeding, pruning and cutting, reaping and winnowing. The men, however, could not be constantly present on their farms. They tilled their lands in the time of peace, but were obliged to leave them, in obedience to the call to fight the king's battles.

**Cleansing the land before tilling.** Before beginning cultivation, a piece of ground had to be cleansed of all impurities. As already noted, the Vendidad enjoins that the ground, on which

[5] Vd. 3. 31.
[6] Vd. 3. 32.
[7] Vd. 3. 4, 23.
[8] Vd. 3. 24.
[9] Vd. 3. 25-29.
[10] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30, 34, p. 23.
[11] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 31, p. 23.

a dead man or a dead dog has lain, should be cleansed of all dead matter and allowed to lie fallow for a year. If a man tilled a piece of land defiled by the dead, within the prohibited period, he was liable for punishment.[12] At the end of the specified period, when the danger of spreading contagion from the dead had ceased, the ground was held fit to be watered and ploughed. But, even then, due precautions were required to see that no bones, hair, blood and putrefying matter, was lying on the ground. The man would again be punished, if he at once began sowing the land, without duly clearing it of all dead matter.[13]

**Agriculturists invoke divine help.** A green sheet of waving corn is every farmer's desire. His daily prayer is for fertilizing rains, full fruitage, and rich crops. Sacrificial offerings and consecration of the produce of the field took place at seasonal festivals. Sacred formulas were recited at the time of the first reaping of corn, and the first crop was consecrated as a ceremonial offering to Ahura Mazda.[14] The creator has created fodder for cattle.[15] Asking for fodder for their flocks was the fervent prayer of these agricultural people.[16] The man who grows fodder for cattle is praised in the ritual.[17] Tishtrya showers his fertilizing waters upon the pasture fields, just as he waters the corn fields.[18] He is devoutly invoked to produce the timely rains that would clothe the earth with green. But the chief agricultural deity is Mithra, whose standing epithet is *gaoyaoiti,* 'lord of wide pastures.' He causes grass to grow in abundance on fields and farms, plains and vales, so that cattle may freely graze there.[19]

**The kind of crops grown by the farmers.** The chief grain crop was wheat, which is spoken of as the best of all species of grain.[20] Sacrificial cakes called Draonah were made of wheat. Barley and other kinds of corn were also raised. Besides corn fields, we find mention of pasture fields, on which fodder was grown on an extensive scale.[21] The texts speak of hay stacks

[12] Vd. 6. 1-5.
[13] Vd. 6. 6. 9.
[14] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 26. 11, pp. 11, 12.
[15] Ys. 47. 3; 48. 6.
[16] Ys. 35. 4, 7.
[17] Vsp. 1. 9.
[18] Yt. 8. 29.
[19] Yt. 10. 112.
[20] Nr., bk. 1, ch. 8, App. A. 2.
[21] Yt. 8. 29; Vd. 3. 4; 15. 41, 42.

piled up on the fields.[22] Various fruit trees were also cultivated.[23]

**Agricultural implements.** We have no means of determining the period at which the plough was introduced in Iran. We glean from the ancient texts that there was a well-developed agricultural stage among the Iranian people. The plough, made of wood, with the point of the share shod with metal, was pulled by oxen. Ox-goads, mortars of stone, hand-mills, spades, axes, mattocks and sickles were among the implements used by cultivators.[24]

**Agriculture depended upon irrigation.** Ancient Iran had few rivers of large volume and, generally, water had to be brought from a distance through open channels, or underground conduits. A net-work of irrigation canals distributed the water in fields. We learn from the texts that complaints were often made that some people had deflected the course of streams, and, without justification, taken the waters for their own farms.[25] Wells, generally connected with one another by subterranean conduits, were common, and from them water was drawn, probably by water-wheels, and circulated in the fields.[26] The gift of a rill of running water to the pious was regarded as an expiation for one's wrongs.[27]

**Cattle-farming.** The Kianians were a pastoral, as well as an agricultural people, and the rearing of stock was extensively carried on. The cow, or ox, is the symbolic representation of the earth, and Fashioner of the Cow is an expression used in the Gathas to designate the creator of earthly existence. The Genius of Kine demands of Ahura Mazda a herdsman and the blessings of pasture, and the creator points to Zarathushtra as the ideal protector of the kine.[28] Next to agriculture, cattle-breeding was the chief means of livelihood of the people. Their wealth was measured by the number of their cattle, and we find the prophet complaining, when faced with poverty and opposition on all sides, that he owned few cattle.[29] Payments, small and large,

[22] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 37. 34, p. 44.
[23] Vd. 3. 4, 23.
[24] Vd. 14. 10, 11; cf. Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, pp. 85, 86, 246-248, New York, 1906.
[25] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 35, p. 23.
[26] Vd. 6. 33-35; 13. 38.
[27] Vd. 14. 12, 13.
[28] Ys. 29. 1, 2, 6.
[29] Ys. 46. 2.

were made in cattle.[30] Happy was the man who had in his family cattle and herds,[31] and auspicious was the land on which flocks and herds lived and throve.[32] The prophet inveighs against the predatory neighbours, who harassed the farmers by frequent raids upon their cattle farms, and against the tyrant chiefs who robbed the peasants of their cattle.[33] He blesses the man who hurls such wicked ones from power.[34] Heavy punishment in the next world is declared to be in store for those disturbers of social peace.[35] Cows led astray by marauders implore Mithra for help, with tears running over their face, and long to return to their farms.[36] In the Confession of Faith, the faithful one undertakes to protect cattle from thieves and robbers.[37] The dog was an indispensable companion of the herder in his work of tending the cattle. The dog who day and night watched near the fold is especially called *pasush-haurva,* 'protector of cattle.'[38] Stables for cattle were erected on a considerable scale and it was a means of expiating one's wrongs to erect a stable for the animals of a pious man.[39]

The devout pray for the prosperity of cattle,[40] who contribute to man's subsistence.[41] Abundance of cattle in the houses and villages of the Mazdayasnians is the constant desire.[42] The Guardian Spirits of the dead protect cattle.[43] They bless the householder with herds of cattle when they are invoked and propitiated.[44] Similar are the blessings of the fire of the hearth for the householder who tends it carefully and feeds it with proper fuel.[45] The prophet invokes his blessings upon King Vishtaspa that he may be rich in cattle.[46] Flocks multiply a thousandfold in a house in which Ashi is invoked.[47] Mithra is termed cattle-giving,[48] and bestows herds of oxen upon the house in which he is propitiated.[49] Tishtrya, likewise, gives flocks of cattle.[50] The ceremonial preparation of Haoma juice in honour of Ahura

[30] Vd. 7. 41-43; 9. 37-39.
[31] Vd. 3. 2.
[32] Vd. 3. 5. 6.
[33] Ys. 33. 4; 44. 20.
[34] Ys. 46. 4.
[35] Ys. 49. 4; 51. 14.
[36] Yt. 10. 38, 86.
[37] Ys. 12. 2.
[38] Vd. 13. 17, 18.
[39] Vd. 14. 14.
[40] Ys. 45. 9.
[41] Ys. 48. 5.
[42] Ys. 60. 3.
[43] Yt. 13. 22.
[44] Yt. 13. 52.
[45] Ys. 62. 10; Ny. 5. 10; Vd 18. 27.
[46] Yt. 23. 4; 24. 2.
[47] Yt 18. 4, 5.
[48] Yt. 10. 65.
[49] Yt. 10. 28.
[50] Yt. 8. 17, 19.

Mazda and Zarathushtra brings increase of cattle.[51] Cattle bring nourishment for men, and wish them praise and victory, food and clothing.[52]

[51] Vsp 12. 1.
[52] Ys. 10. 20; Yt. 14. 61.

## CHAPTER XVII

## ARTISANS AND ART

**Manufacturers.** We have already stated that the Avestan texts only once mention the fourth, or artisan, class by name. This is by no means because of any stigma of inferiority, such as was attached to the corresponding fourth order of Indian society. Although the name of the artisan class is not mentioned, the texts often refer to men living by handicrafts of various kinds. The Avestan people had their goldsmiths and silversmiths, who made ear-rings and necklaces for their women;[1] and the blacksmiths and coppersmiths who smelted ores,[2] manufactured implements for ritual, agriculture, and warfare, and made the cooking utensils and other articles for household use.[3] The art of pottery was practised in Iran from very early times, and the texts mention the kilns of potter and glaziers.[4] Dishes and pitchers, bowls and sundry objects for daily use, bricks and tiles for building purposes, and baked clay pipes, for the conveyance of water, were among the many articles made by the potter. Spinning is mentioned as a special occupation for maids at home.[5] Woven clothes of various descriptions and carpets, beddings, sheets, cushions, and pillows, which the texts speak of must have kept many hands busy.[6] Shoes and sandals,[7] garments of the skin of beaver,[8] marten, ermine, grey squirrel, miniver and weasel,[9] water-skins,[10] belts, straps, saddles, lassos, and a large number of other things made of leather, must have required the service of cobblers. Tents and pavilions, flags and banners of various colors and designs must have required painters and tent makers.

[1] Yt. 5. 127; 15. 57; 17. 10; Vd. 8. 87, 88.
[2] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 37, p. 55.
[3] Vd. 8. 89, 90; 16. 6.
[4] Vd. 8. 84, 85.
[5] Vd. 5. 60, 61; 7. 20. 21.
[6] Yt. 5. 102, 130; 17. 9; Vd. 5. 27; 7. 10; 8. 23-25; 14. 14.
[7] Yt. 5. 64, 78; 15. 57; Vd. 6. 27.
[8] Yt. 5. 129; Vd. 8. 23-25.
[9] ShN. 2. 362.
[10] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 58, p. 74; vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 30, p. 61.

Weavers of mats and reeds made baskets and coverings for the floor and roof, and thatchers worked on the huts and cottages of the people. Carpenters made household furniture.

**Royal art.** Besides the various ornaments of gold used by the wealthy classes, thrones, crowns, and various other precious objects were made for the use of kings. Ahura Mazda and his archangels are represented as seated on golden thrones in heaven.[11] Royal personages are depicted as sacrificing to Vayu from their golden thrones, supported by golden pillars, and covered with golden canopies.[12] The thrones were generally made either of gold, ivory, or turquoise, and were richly decked with precious stones.[13] Royal elephants were decked in brocade and gold. Kings and princes wore crowns of gold or rubies on their heads.[14] Beds having feet inlaid with gold,[15] golden helmets, garments and girdles,[16] golden diadems,[17] golden shoes, [18] golden seals, and signet-rings,[19] golden cuirasses,[20] golden hilted swords,[21] golden pointed arrows,[22] golden caparisons for horses,[23] litters of aloe or other woods, with cloth of gold, brocade curtain and lining and turquoise seats,[24] golden salvers,[25] golden stools,[26] tapestries, embroideries, curtains,[27] goblets of ruby, turquoise, topaz, and lapis-lazuli,[28] are among the many articles of fine art manufactured under royal patronage.

[11] Vd. 19. 31, 32.
[12] Yt. 15. 31, 35, 39.
[13] ShN. 2. 30, 77, 242, 411; 4. 145, 200, 279, 281, 292, 300, 357, 362; 5. 170, 309.
[14] Yt. 5. 128; 15. 57; ShN. 4. 311; 5. 190, 310.
[15] Yt. 17. 9.
[16] Yt. 15. 57; ShN. 2. 21, 36; 4. 321.
[17] Yt. 5. 64.
[18] Yt. 5. 78; 15. 57; ShN. 2. 167, 400, 406, 410; 3. 32, 38, 84, 86, 126; 4. 146, 180, 282, 300.
[19] Vd. 2. 7; ShN. 2. 33, 63, 137, 139, 198; 3. 86; 4. 218, 237, 297, 298, 300.
[20] Yt. 10. 112.
[21] Yt. 14. 27.
[22] Yt. 10. 129.
[23] Yt. 8. 18, 20, 46; 14. 9.
[24] ShN. 2. 21, 98, 105; 4. 232; 5. 162.
[25] ShN. 2. 214, 215.
[26] ShN. 4. 201.
[27] ShN. 2. 362; 3. 283; 4. 275, 357.
[28] ShN. 2. 77; 3. 26-29.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## ARCHITECTURE

**Structural art.** No architectural works of this period remain to enlighten us in regard to the structural skill of the ancient Iranians. The Avestan texts mention human habitations of the crudest type, as well as some of the most elaborate and artistic design. Among the abodes of the first kind are mentioned huts of wood, tents of felt, dwellings made of light materials such as could be moved from one place to another.[1] The houses built for permanent habitation were airy and well-lighted. The door generally opened on the south. The houses had flat roofs and, evidently, no upper stories. In addition to clay, which was mostly used by poor people as a building material for their houses, bricks, concrete, and stone were used for the houses of the upper classes.[2] Large well-built houses, with doors and windows, verandahs and balconies are mentioned in the texts.[3] As livestock constituted the chief property of the people, the houses had generally attached to them stables or folds for cows and bullocks, goats and sheep, horses and camels.[4] The Dinkard refers to the lost texts which described the manner of constructing farm houses, with cottages for farmers and shelters for cattle and beasts.[5]

One hundred to ten thousand windows, a hundred or a thousand columns and correspondingly numerous balconies are mentioned by the Avesta in describing the abodes of the angels and kings.[6] The Shah Namah repeatedly speaks of the great architectural beauty of the royal palaces, with their spacious throne rooms and audience and banquet halls, chambers, balconies, galleries, and their pleasure houses built of crystal, arabesqued

[1] Vd. 8. 1, 3.
[2] Vd. 6. 51; 8. 8, 10.
[3] Yt. 10. 30; Vd. 2. 26, 30, 38; 7. 15.
[4] Yt. 10. 86; Vd. 14. 14, 17; 15. 23, 26, 29, 32.
[5] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 37 35, pp. 44, 45.
[6] Ys. 57. 21; Yt. 5. 101; 10. 28; 24. 45; Vd. 18. 28.

with gold, or studded with emeralds.[7] But no architectural monuments remain to perpetuate the glory of Kianian Iran.

**Temple buildings.** Religion inspires the architecture of a nation, and the people ever devote to the erection of their temples both skill and energy commensurate with their material greatness and prosperity. Owing to the lack of information in the extant Avestan texts, we have no definite ideas of the design or construction of the sacred edifices of this period. Since the fire of Ahura Mazda was the chief symbolic element upon which centered all Zoroastrian rituals and prayers, the structures which protected it were the chief temples of the faith. The place of the sacred fire is called *dāitya gātu*, or the 'lawful place.'[8] Three of the great fires of this period are mentioned by name in the later Pahlavi texts, which inform us that they were built on the tops of mountains.[9] We have no further information regarding the buildings. That there must have been a definite design or style followed in the construction of the fire-temples, we may judge from a statement in the Dinkard that the lost texts outlined and discussed the width and height proper to the doors used in these edifices.[10] The Shah Namah mentions domes and cupolas, floors of gold and silver, and walls inlaid with precious stones in the abodes of fire.[11]

**Mortuary structures.** As the burial of the dead is classed among the most inexpiable of sins,[12] and as the demolishing of tombs and the digging out of corpses are held to be meritorious deeds,[13] mortuary buildings would not be expected in Zoroastrian Iran. The Vendidad enjoins the exposure of the dead on the summits of mountains where they may be devoured by corpse-eating birds and dogs.[14] The dried bones are later to be collected and placed in a receptacle made of either stone, concrete or clay.[15]

The Shah Namah, however, speaks of charnel houses built of various designs, with lofty halls, ivory seats, and gates painted red and blue, as the final resting places of some kings and heroes.[16]

[7] ShN. 2. 30, 101, 102; 3. 19, 325.
[8] Vd. 8. 81-86.
[9] Phl. Ny. 5. 5, 6; Bd. 12. 18, 34; 17. 5-8; Zsp. 6. 22; 11. 9.
[10] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 37. 5, pp. 39, 40.
[11] ShN. 2. 409; 5. 34, 35, 75.
[12] Vd. 1. 13.
[13] Vd. 3. 8, 9, 12, 13, 36-39.
[14] Vd. 6. 44, 45.
[15] Vd. 6. 49-51.
[16] ShN. 2. 183, 184; 3. 68, 104; 4. 271; 5. 275.

**Fortifications.** As the country had often to wage wars against its traditional foes, the Turanians, and other tribes and races, it required a strong line of defensive works. Consequently the frontiers most exposed to the attacks of enemies were covered with a net-work of strongholds, and important towns were surrounded by chains of fortresses. Castles on lofty heights,[17] and fortresses with strong walls, ramparts and gates of iron railings were built at all strategic points.[18] The Shah Namah speaks of the watch-towers, constructed on the borders of the important cities, from which sentinels always kept watch upon the movements of the enemy.[19]

[17] Yt. 5. 54, 57.
[18] YtZ. 62, 63; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 25. 17, p. 8; ShN. 2. 131; 5. 99.
[19] ShN. 4. 52; 5. 183.

## CHAPTER XIX

## PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

**Causes of disease.** Angra Mainyu has primarily plagued the earth with countless diseases,[1] which, as a consequence, are generally ascribed to demoniac possession. Diseases are often referred to their particular demons, or are indentified with the demons supposed to have caused them, being then addressed as malign beings.[2] In the second place, diseases are attributed to magic exercised by one person upon another to harm him,[3] or by an evil eye cast upon one by some enemy.[4] Later, with the growth of enlightenment, sickness comes to be accepted as a natural affliction, due to physical or natural causes.

**Diseases believed to have been caused by supernatural phenomena cured by the recital of spells and incantations.** When a sick person was believed to be suffering from the evil machinations of a demon or of a man, a priest was summoned to effect a cure through recital of the sacred spells.[5] It is said in the sacred books that a healer who cured the sick by means of religious incantations was the best of healers, and that when the several healers, who healed with plants or knife or spells, came together before a sick person, the priest-physician was to be given preference above all.[6] The patient was evidently made to lie on his back, and the priest recited probably the Yasht dedicated to Asha Vahishta, waving a white kerchief from head to foot of the sick person, as is sometimes done to the present day among people holding orthodox views in religion. While reciting certain religious formulas, the priest called out several demons and diseases by name and conjured away the particular demon that was supposed to have caused the sickness.[7] It is said that Asha Vahishta is the spiritual source, and the physician, the earthly medium

[1] Vd. 22. 2, 9.
[2] Vd. 20. 7, 9; 22. 21, 22.
[3] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 1, p. 62.
[4] Vd. 20. 3, 6.
[5] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 17. 7, p. 48.
[6] Yt. 3. 6; Vd. 7. 44.
[7] Vd. 20. 7, 9; 22. 21, 22.

that contributes to the healing of the sick.[8] Besides Asha Vahishta, the other angels connected with healing are Airyaman and Haoma. The Guardian Spirit of King Thraetaona, the reputed founder of the art of medicine, is invoked to withstand different kinds of fever and other diseases.[9]

**Physical ailments cured by drugs or by surgical operations.** Diseases believed to have originated through physical causes were treated by medicine prepared mostly from herbs and plants, or by operating upon the diseased part of the body.[10] About thirty-five different kinds of disease are mentioned by name in the extant Avestan texts.[11] Ahura Mazda is said to have created myriads of healing plants for the welfare of man.[12] Waters are also spoken of as having the healing power.

**The qualifications of a doctor.** The sacred texts refer to the existence of elaborate rules that were embodied in the lost books to test the skill of candidates for the medical profession, before they were permitted to practise among the people.[13] It was highly objectionable for an uncertified physician to treat the sick.[14] It was generally the rule to require a new surgeon to prove his fitness by performing three operations on the bodies of demon-worshippers. If he failed in the first operation and the patient died, he was given a second opportunity, and if it proved as disastrous as the first, he was given a third and last chance. If the final operation proved fatal, he was declared to have failed, and was prohibited from practising his art forever.[15] If, on the other hand, all the three operations of the probationer proved successful, he was declared a qualified surgeon, fit to practise among the faithful.[16]

**Professional discipline.** The work of restoring health to the sick is highly meritorious, and the healer's profession is held in great esteem. The texts speak of the worthiness of a good physician, also of the unworthiness of one who acts contrary to

[8] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 14, p. 34.
[9] Yt. 13. 131.
[10] Yt. 3. 6; Vd. 7. 44; 20. 3; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 37. 55, p. 47.
[11] Yt. 5. 92, 93; 13. 131; 14. 48; Vd. 2. 29; 7. 58, 71; 20. 3, 6, 7, 9; 21. 2, 18; 22. 21.
[12] Vd. 20. 4; Dk., vol 16, bk. 8. 36. 16; 37. 60, pp. 34, 48.
[13] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 24, p. 35.
[14] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 25, p. 35.
[15] Vd. 7. 36-38.
[16] Vd. 7. 39, 40.

the disciplinary rules of the profession.[17] A conscientious physician, it is said, does all that his learning enables him to expedite the recovery of a sick person, and does not lengthen the sickness of his patient to extort more money.[18] It is declared very wrong for a physician who treats a person attacked by a contagious disease to move about carelessly, and so become a source of spreading the epidemic among healthy people.[19] A Zoroastrian was evidently free to practise among non-Zoroastrians,[20] but restrictions were imposed upon physicians of alien faiths in practice among the Zoroastrians. The faithful were bound to seek, and employ, a co-religionist as their healer, and were to consult a non-Iranian physician, only in the event of failure to find one who was an Iranian.[21]

**The scale of fees to be paid to physicians.** The profession of the physician was fairly well-organized, and we find that his services were remunerated according to fixed regulations. The fees charged were in accord with patient's rank in society, his grade, if an officer of the state, and also with regard to the seriousness of his malady.[22] The physician, under such circumstances, had to cure a priest in return of his pious blessing only, but was rewarded with the present of either oxen, cows, mares, she-asses, and she-camels, or a chariot with four horses, as he healed the masters and mistresses of a house, village, town, or country.[23] On his recovery, the patient was expected to pay the fees to the doctor without unnecessary delay. Before currency came into vogue, payments were made in kind. Cattle formed the chief standard for the valuation of commodities, or of services rendered by workmen. Certain classes of patients paid their fees in kind and some were exempted from paying anything at all.[24] Doctors were often the recipients of food, dress, horse, or property as personal gifts.[25]

**Veterinary surgeons.** In addition to those who treated human ailments, the Kianians had their veterinarians, who cured

[17] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 15, p. 34.
[18] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36 18, p. 34.
[19] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 19, p 34.
[20] Vd. 7. 36-39.
[21] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36, 27, p. 35.
[22] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 21, pp. 34, 35.
[23] Vd. 7. 41-43.
[24] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36 22, p. 35.
[25] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 36. 17, p. 34.

the diseases of animals, either by medicine or by surgical operation.[26] The Vendidad names several kinds of diseases of dogs.[27] Just as in the case of a physician who cured mankind, the veterinarian had his fees regulated according to the worth of the animal that he treated.[28]

[26] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 39, p. 56; vol. 16, bk. 8 30. 29; 37. 55, pp. 35, 47.
[27] Vd. 14. 17
[28] Vd. 7 43.

## CHAPTER XX

## SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Extreme regard for cleanliness.** The hygienic laws form an important part of Zoroastrianism. Next to life, we are told, the best good for man is purity.[1] Purity of the body is an indispensable condition for purity of the mind and soul. Bodily cleanliness contributes to the health of the individual, and health is the supreme gift which worshippers constantly beg from the heavenly beings. Strict adherence to cleanly habits and aversion to filthy surroundings, have been the distinguishing characteristics of the Iranian people, during the entire history of the race. Through authoritative injunctions, they have been habituated to daily bathing every morning; to scrupulous washing of the uncovered parts of the body, such as, face, hands, and feet, on leaving the bed, after relieving nature, before prayers, and before every meal; to regarding it as sinful to drop hairs and parings of the nails in or near the house, or to eject saliva upon the floor of the house; to keeping the household furniture and utensils clean, never allowing dirt or filth to be piled up, in or outside of dwellings, nor washing soiled clothes on the banks of the rivers or lakes, nor carrying any decaying matter near the waters. Uncleanliness of every kind is regarded a wrong against the general health; hence an impiety. According to the Vendidad, dirt, filth, and swamps breed germs that originate diseases. Fresh air and light are highly valued as the natural purifiers of all uncleanliness. The light of the sun, it is asserted, brings purification to the entire creation.[2] Without it, we are informed, the demons of disease and death who prowl about in the darkness of night would plague the whole world of living beings.[3]

Saliva is held unclean and none is to eat or drink from a vessel that another has touched to his lips. Generally everyone is to eat from a separate vessel, but if two or more persons eat from the same dish, each is required to put the food into his

[1] Ys. 48. 5; Vd. 5. 21.
[2] Yt. 6. 2; Ny. 1. 12.
[3] Yt. 6. 3; Ny. 1. 13.

mouth, without touching his fingers to his lips. Similarly, when drinking water, the pitcher is not to be touched to the lips, but is to be held aloft and the water allowed to drop into the mouth. The exhaled breath is likewise considered unclean. The priest must, therefore, wear a white covering over his mouth, when he approaches the fire altar, or when he performs other sacred ceremonies. Besides the daily baths, and other precautions of cleanliness, incumbent on every Zoroastrian, the priest must periodically cleanse himself by ritualistic washings.

**The defilement caused by the dead.** The chief sources of contagion, according to Zoroastrianism, are corpses and carcases of dead human beings and animals. The germs of disease are figuratively called the demons of contagious diseases. They gather together in burial grounds, feed and revel, thrive and spread, emit poisonous gases and nauseous stench, pollute the earth and defile the air, with the result that fevers and plagues originate from these haunts of infectious diseases.[4] Burial of the dead thus endangers the health of the living, and is classed among inexpiable sins.[5] If a man has buried the dead in the ground, he is required to disinter the corpse when the wrong done has been explained to him.[6] If he does so within half a year or a year he undergoes a penalty of corporal punishment, and is forthwith purged of guilt, but if he does not dig out the corpse for a period of two years, he commits a crime which can in no wise be atoned.[7]

**The disposal of the dead.** The corpses of the dead being unclean are to be disposed of in the manner least injurious to the health of the living. It is stated that, when a death occurs through old age, sickness, or any natural causes, the body of the dead person soon begins to decay; but if the death is due to any accident, which suddenly ends the life of a healthy person, decomposition is longer delayed.[8] The corpse is to be removed to its final resting place during the daytime, and never after sunset,[9] because the light of the sun is the best preventive against the spread of contagion, and the carrying of a corpse at night exposes the corpse-bearers and those who follow the corpse to its place of final disposal, to infection.

When a death occurred at a time when heavy snow, rain, or

[4] Vd. 7. 56-58. [5] Vd. 1. 13. [6] Vd. 3. 8, 9, 12, 13. [7] Vd. 3. 36-39. [8] Vd. 7. 1, 2, 4, 5. [9] Vd. 8. 4.

floods made the roads impossible, the Avestan people were enjoined to dig a furrow wide enough to admit the corpse, and a foot deep in hard ground, or half the height of a man, if the ground was soft, in a clean, dry, and secluded part of the house. The corpse was to be laid in it, and the surface of the furrow was to be covered up with pieces of bricks or stones and with sand. The corpse was to be so kept for a period of two or three nights, or, if the rigours of the climate necessitated, to the length of even a month, in the house, and to be removed to its final resting place, when the snow began to melt, and the floods began to flow, and the birds began to fly, and the plants began to grow.[10] The house was then fumigated with incense. If one let the corpse remain in the house after the climatic difficulties had passed away he was guilty of the wilful murder of one of the faithful, and was to be punished for the crime.[11]

Far away from the populated part of a city, to the highest summit of a mountain, the corpses were to be removed for their final disposal. The dead body, in early times was fastened with brass or stones, so that the dogs and birds that devoured its flesh might not carry the bones to the waters and trees, thus spreading contagion through them among mankind. Any disregard in carrying out these injunctions was punishable with four hundred stripes.[12] A corpse was thus to be placed provisionally, until the vultures had done their work on the flesh. The bones were then to be collected in a ossuary, made either of stone or clay, and so constructed that the rays of the sun could penetrate to its interior.[13]

**The cleansing of the earth defiled by the dead.** The earth which grows plants and trees, corn and fodder, for men and animals is not to be defiled by the dead. Penalty ranging from twice thirty stripes to two thousand blows, as already referred to, are prescribed for those who wantonly throw upon the ground a bone of a dead man or a dog of the various sizes, beginning from the top joint of the little finger and reaching the bulk of the whole skeleton, so that grease and marrow would contaminate the ground.[14] According to the Vendidad, the piece of ground in a field upon which a man or a dog had died, was to be kept

[10] Vd. 5. 10-13; 8. 4-10.
[11] Vd. 5. 14.
[12] Vd. 6. 44-48.
[13] Vd. 6. 49-51.
[14] Vd. 6. 10-25.

fallow for the period of one full year before it was cultivated. Four hundred stripes was the punishment for anyone who ploughed and sowed it before the expiry of the prohibited period.[15] Even after this long delay in utilizing the defiled ground for cultivation, the farmer had first to carefully examine and remove any bones, hair, or other parts of the dead, that might remain there. Failure to observe this precaution made the husbandman liable to a penalty of two hundred stripes each with the two punishing whips.[16] Though a year was required to purify of defilement a piece of ground upon which a corpse had lain exposed to the light of the sun, it required fifty full years, we are told, to restore the natural purity of ground under which a corpse was buried; which is to say, until the corpse is reduced to the dust.[17]

Though the man who had voluntarily defiled the earth, either by burning or throwing dead matter upon it, was rigorously punished, he was not held responsible for any dead matter thrown upon the earth by animals. For example, if a man was watering a corn field and a dog, a fox, or a wolf brought in some dead matter and dropped it in the water, he had simply to remove it and go on with his work without fearing any penalty. Because, it is said, that if dead matter thus brought by animals, birds, or winds were to render a man guilty, life would be impossible. For so vast a number of men and animals die daily upon the face of the earth, that if their dead matter carried by any means, against which men had no remedy, were to make the man working in the field a sinner, all desire on the part of mankind for cleanliness and righteousness would vanish.[18]

**The manner of giving purification to the waters polluted by the dead matter.** Water, another of the elements so essential to the life of sentient beings and plants, was to be kept free from any kind of uncleanliness, in accordance with the ancient religious precepts, so hygienic in character. Not only was a man to abstain from throwing filth in the water, or in any way depriving it of its natural purity,[19] but it was his duty to remove the cause of impurity brought about by another. For example, if a man who happened to pass by a stream of running water saw

[15] Vd. 6. 1-5.
[16] Vd. 6. 6-9.
[17] Vd. 7. 45-50.
[18] Vd. 5. 5-7.
[19] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 27, p. 67.

a corpse floating upon it, he could not pass along on his way, believing that it was not his concern. The mere fact that he had seen a dead body contaminating pure water, which would be unknowingly used by some men or animals to the injury of their health, was enough to impel him to the duty of removing this threatened harm to others He was to take off his shoes and clothes, go down into the water ankle-deep or knee-deep, waist-deep, or even the full depth of a man, take hold of the corpse, or any part of it which he could reach; remove the dead matter from the water, and place it on dry land.[20]

The texts discuss in detail the degrees of defilement that may reach stagnant or running waters through contact with dead matter. As long as a corpse lies in either standing or moving waters, they are unfit for any use, but after the cause of pollution, the putrefying body, is removed, the waters might be used, after taking the following precautionary measures. If the corpse is lying in the middle of a pond, the water at a distance of six steps, on all the four sides of the spot on which the corpse has lain, is to be considered as polluted. To cleanse this polluted water, it is necessary, first, to remove the corpse and then to draw out the half, or the third or the fourth or the fifth part of the entire water. After the removal of such large quantity of water the pond is considered to be cleansed, and the remaining water could be used.[21] Similarly an equal quantity of water taken out of a well defiled by a corpse, renders the remaining part of the well fit for use.[22] When a corpse is found buried in snow or hail, it is to be carried to a dry place. An area covering three steps on each of the four sides of the spot on which the corpse was found, is to be considered polluted. Afterwards, when the snow begins to melt away, and considerable water has flowed off, the remaining water is free from infection, and may be drunk by cattle and men.[23] Of the waters of a running stream, the water in the space of three steps down the stream, nine steps up the stream, and six steps across the spot where the corpse was at the time of its removal, is to be considered polluted. The water is to be declared free from contagion, when, after the removal of the corpse, the stream has flowed three times.[24]

[20] Vd. 6. 26-29; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 28, p. 67.
[21] Vd. 6. 30-32.
[22] Vd. 6. 33-35.
[23] Vd. 6. 36-38.
[24] Vd. 6. 39-41.

A penalty of twice four hundred blows attaches to him who, after coming in contact with the dead, touches the waters before receiving purification.[25]

**Treatment of clothes that have come in contact with the dead.** The garments worn by a person suffering from a contagious disease are to be destroyed. If a man refrains from using such clothes himself, but sells them to others, he is guilty of a great crime against the general health of mankind, and is liable to heavy punishment.[26] The clothes that have come in contact with a person who has died of ordinary sickness may be cleansed according to the prescribed rules. The upper sheet of the bedding on which a man has died, as well as those clothes that have come in contact with the dead, are to be regarded as defiled by corruption, infection, and pollution.[27] The garments upon which blood or vomit or matter of the dead has fallen are to be rent and buried in the ground, but if they are not so injured they can be cleansed.[28] If the garments are of leather, they are to be washed three times with bull's urine, to be rubbed three times with the dry sand, to be washed three times with water, and then to be exposed on the window for three months; but if the garments be of woven cloth, they are to be washed and rubbed by the same materials six times, and to be exposed to the air for a period of six months.[29] The clothes that have been worn by a woman who has brought forth a still-born child may be cleansed with bull's urine and water.[30] But the clothes and sheets that have come in contact with a dead man, or the ones worn by the aforesaid woman, cannot be used by a priest, a warrior or a husbandman, even after careful washing and cleansing. They are to be taken in use for low purpose only, such as, by a woman during her menses, or as bandages and coverings for the sick.[31]

**The process of cleansing defiled utensils.** Vessels used for eating that have been defiled by contact with the dead matter are to be cleansed according to the prescribed rules. If the vessels are of gold one washing with the bull's urine, one rubbing with the dry sand, and one washing with the water are enough to restore their former purity. If the vessels be of silver,

[25] Vd. 8. 104, 105.
[26] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 29. 9, 10, p. 18.
[27] Vd. 7. 10, 11.
[28] Vd. 7. 13.
[29] Vd. 7 14, 15.
[30] Vd. 5. 56.
[31] Vd. 5. 57-59; 7. 17-19.

twice as much washing and rubbing are required to cleanse them thoroughly. Vessels of brass, steel, and stone are to be washed and rubbed three, four, and six times respectively, before they may be taken into use again. Utensils made of earth, wood, and clay that have incurred pollution can under no circumstances be cleansed, and are never to be used again.[32] For the same reason, the woman in her periodical sickness or in child bed, is to be given food in vessels made of brass, lead or other metal; but never in wooden or earthen vessels, as these may not be made clean.[33]

**Impurity and wood for the fire.** A man is not to pollute the wood that he takes for the fire with any dead matter. He is free from guilt, if it is defiled by means which he cannot control. Thus, if a man dies in the depth of a valley, and a bird feeds on his corpse, and afterwards flies to the summit of a mountain, sits on a tree and vomits on a branch, or otherwise makes it unclean; and a man comes up in search of wood for the fire, unknowingly cuts the same branch and splits it into logs and takes them in use, he does not incur the guilt of spreading defilement.[34] Fuel known to have been defiled by dead matter is to be placed on the ground, portions of varied length are to be cut off as specified with reference to the hardness or softness, wetness or dryness of the wood, and are to be sprinkled with water before they are used.[35]

**The method of cleansing various objects defiled by the dead.** Corn and fodder are to be cleansed according to the prescribed rules, in order to remove pollution. A certain portion of corn is to be discarded, according as it is dry or wet, split or thrashed, and the remainder taken in use after sprinkling it with water.[36]

If the Haoma plant is defiled by the dead matter, four fingers length of the twig should be cut off from the place of defilement, and the remainder should be taken in use only after it has been laid aside for a whole year.[37]

A cow that has eaten dead matter becomes unclean thereby, and her milk is not to be used in libations for a year; after a year, whatever comes from her is to be considered pure.[38] The

[32] Vd. 7. 73-75.
[33] Vd. 16. 6.
[34] Vd. 5. 1-4.
[35] Vd. 7. 28-31.
[36] Vd. 7. 32-35.
[37] Vd. 6. 43.
[38] Vd. 7. 76, 77.

man who eats a carcass is unclean for ever and ever, and is liable to capital punishment.[39]

**Precautionary measures to be taken by one who is defiled by the dead in the wilderness.** The man who contracts defilement becomes a danger to public health. Even the sun, moon, and the stars, it is said, grieve to shine upon him.[40] When a man happens to touch a dead body in the wilderness, he is to try his best to remove his defilement. If the corpse with which he has come in contact be partly eaten by the corpse-eating dogs and birds, he has to wash himself thirty times with the bull's urine, which is believed to possess elements that will thoroughly remove all dirt and grease from the skin; but if the dead matter be untouched by dogs or birds, he shall apply the bull's urine fifteen times, and rub himself dry with it.[41] After taking those prompt measures, he shall turn towards an inhabited place to procure a thorough cleansing. On his way he must take care not to touch trees, or the waters of the lakes or rivers which he passes, lest he should contaminate them by his pollution. Violation of this injunction makes him liable to a penalty of twice four hundred stripes.[42] He is to inform the first man who happens to meet him on his way, of his pollution, and to seek his help for purification. If the man refuses to cleanse him, the defiled person is freed of the third of his responsibility. When running on his way, he comes across another man, he is again to lay his case before him and ask from him the proper washing. If he also refuses, the half of the polluted person's responsibility is removed. While proceeding to the third stage, he finds a third person who similarly discards his request to cleanse him, he is freed of his entire responsibility. Finally, when he reaches a village or a town, he should inform any whom he meets that he has been defiled by the dead, and is in need of purification. If the people care not to give him ablution, then he may wash his body by himself with the bull's urine and water.[43]

**Sanitary injunctions for the corpse-bearers.** The corpse being unclean those that remove the dead to the final resting place are required to observe strict regulations. The corpse-bearers have to put on special white clothes when they carry a corpse.

[39] Vd. 7. 23, 24.
[40] Vd. 9. 41.
[41] Vd. 8. 97-99.
[42] Vd. 8. 100-103.
[43] Vd. 8. 104-106.

These clothes cannot be worn by them again in their daily life. No amount of washing can make the clothes once put on by the corpse-bearers fit for an ordinary use. By touching the dead body the corpse-bearers have become unclean, and they must undergo ceremonial ablution before they can be pronounced cleansed. They have to wash their hair and bodies with the bull's urine and water.[44] A corpse should never be carried by a single person, two persons at the least are essential. The man who carries a corpse alone on his shoulder or back in any way, so as to be in close contact with the dead matter runs the risk of immediate contagion, and is subjected to the punishment of being kept in isolation and of undergoing other hardships.[45]

**Ceremonial ablutions for a man defiled by the dead.** In addition to the ordinary ceremonial washing with bull's urine and water, to cleanse a person defiled by the dead, other elaborate purificatory rites are performed by qualified priests. Every village and town, having a fairly large number of Zoroastrian inhabitants, has a place specially reserved for such rites even at the present day. Far from the center of population, a spot is selected which has the least water and fewest trees, and which is the cleanest and driest that can be found. The ground is then prepared according to religious injunctions. A definite number of holes of specified depth are dug at a fixed distance from one another, and furrows are drawn during the recital of sacred formulas by the priest.[46] In the ceremony of cleansing, the priest stands outside the furrows, takes a long stick with a brass spoon at one end, and by means of the spoon administers the bull's urine to the defiled person, without touching him. The defiled person is asked, first, to wash his hands three times, and then to wash his body in a prescribed manner. With characteristic fondness for details and symmetry, the texts describe how that on the sprinkling of water on the forepart of the man's skull, the demon of defilement rushes between the brows, and, then jumping from limb to limb at the touch of urine and water, goes down until at the thirty-third jump, between the top of the head and the toe of the foot, she leaves the person entirely.[47] The man must now rub his body dry by applying sand fifteen times, and when the body is thoroughly dried, even to the last

[44] Vd. 8. 11-13.
[45] Vd. 3. 14-21.
[46] Vd. 8. 35-39; 9. 1-11.
[47] Vd. 8. 40-71; 9. 12-26.

hair on his head, he must wash it six times with water, and finally fumigate it with one of the sweet-scented plants.[48]

**Segregation of a person defiled by the dead.** If a person seeks a higher bodily purification than the one detailed above, he must separate himself in a separate part of a house or a temple, refrain from touching man, animal, fire, water, or trees, and thus remain for three nights. On the passing of the third night, he is to wash his body and clothes with bull's urine and water, and again retire to his place of seclusion for a further period of three nights. When six nights have thus passed, the man must take another washing as before, and again retire to his place. Finally, when nine nights have passed, he must, for the last time, cleanse his body with urine and water. Thereafter, from the tenth day, he is clean, and is free to mingle with his fellows.[49]

**The reward of the cleanser.** The services of the purifier were rewarded in Kianian Iran according to the status and position of the defiled person. The lord of a province, we are informed, had to offer a camel of high value to his cleanser, whereas officers of lower grades, as well as women, children and servants, had to give him a stallion, a bull, a cow, or a lamb.[50] Poor people, however, who could not afford to give even the smallest fee in cattle, gave him something of lesser value, according to their means, and were always careful to see that, under no circumstances, did the cleanser leave their houses displeased.[51] The priest, of course, did not pay anything in kind, but gave his pious blessing upon the cleanser.[52]

So meritorious is the work of imparting purification to the defiled that, in the words of the sacred texts, the cleanser rejoices the entire creation by his work of arresting the spread of contagion.[53] Furthermore, he is the happy recipient of paradise after his death.[54] Highly meritorious as is the work of giving purification to the defiled, it carries great responsibilities with it also. The man, therefore, who, without being well versed in the work of imparting cleanliness through religious lustrations, falsely undertakes to cleanse a person infected by the dead, does a public wrong against the general health of the country. Fresh-

[48] Vd. 9. 29-32.
[49] Vd. 9. 33-36.
[50] Vd. 9. 37, 38.
[51] Vd. 9. 39, 40.
[52] Vd. 9. 37.
[53] Vd. 9. 41, 42.
[54] Vd. 9. 43, 44.

ness and health, it is said, depart from the place by such an unsanitary act as his, and sickness and death enter the country. No less than capital punishment is to be meted out to this false cleanser who endangers the life of the populace.[55]

[55] Vd. 9. 51-57.

# CHAPTER XXI

## COMMERCE

**Commercial activities.** The Avestan works contain no mention of coined money, though the Shah Namah leads us to believe that a system of currency existed at this period. However, the sacred texts refer to hoards of gold and silver brought from distant regions,[1] and speak of the use by the wealthy of ornaments made of these precious metals.[2] We have already noticed the existence of an elaborate code of laws on contracts, on individual and joint ownership of property, and regulating such transactions as selling, borrowing, lending and renting. There existed, also, a fairly well advanced system of weights and measures, which indicates some kind of commercial activity among the people of the time. Payments made in produce may have continued as before, but it is probable that coined currency was in circulation, at least, during the later period. Bactria, which plays so important a part in the religious and secular history of the people, was situated on the highway of trade, and the trade-routes between distant countries met at her gates.

The Avestan people, as we glean from the sacred texts, knew the Caspean Sea, as well as large and small waters of the rivers and lakes. It is probable that they navigated these waters in small barges. Throwing bridges over canals was considered one of the most meritorious acts, for it enabled the people to continue their trade uninterruptedly, and afforded free passages over waterways.[3]

Commerce with adjoining countries was evidently carried on by land. We gather from the Shah Namah that products of different climes entered the country and that the merchandise was carried by camels, mules, and donkeys.

**Weights.** The Avestan texts do not preserve all the names of the units of weight that the people must have employed at this

[1] Yt. 17 14.
[2] Yt. 17. 10; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 34, p. 62.
[3] Vd. 14. 16; 18. 74.

period. We learn from the later texts that the Iranians had a fairly elaborate system of weights which were used by merchants, although the extant Avestan texts refer to only two units, known as *asperena,*[4] and *danare.*[5]

**The standard of measurements.** The earliest method of measurement recorded in the extant texts utilized various parts of human body as standard units. Even a hair of the head, or the top joint of the little finger, as we shall see, was used for this purpose. Nature contributed its share in providing the scale of measurement, for, the earth, river, and the sun are referred to in connection with the measures of long distances. Ploughshare and barleycorn, likewise, formed units, and it is only at a later period, that some measures with technical names came to be used by the people.

**Measures of distance.** The foot of an average man was the accepted unit of length. Three feet made a pace or a step.[6] Besides these two measures, taken after a member of the human body, there are six technical names of units of distance often mentioned in the Avestan texts. They are *hāthra, tachar, agoyost, dashmest,* and *yujyast.*[7] We append below a table of these measures with their corresponding values.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Feet | = | I Pace |
| 1,000 Paces | = | I Hāthra |
| 2 Hāthras | = | I Tachar |
| 2 Tachars | = | I Agoyost |
| 2 Agoyosts | = | I Dashmest |
| 2 Dashmests | = | 1 Yujyast |

The *hāthra* was equivalent to a thousand paces, that is, the length of a mile, while the *yujyast* or the longest measure represented a distance of about sixteen miles. Another measure of distance which came in use at a later period among the Avestan people, and which continues to be used to the present day in Persia, is the *parasang.*[8]

In addition to these standard measures, which were employed to designate short and long distances, the texts speak of long

[4] Vd. 5. 60; 7. 20.
[5] Vd. 16. 7; Nr., bk. 3. 7. 5.
[6] Vd. 9. 8-10.
[7] Yt. 8. 23, 29; Vd. 2. 26; 8. 100-102; 13. 17, 18; 14. 14; ZFr. 44; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 19, 68, 78; 20. 6; 21. 18, pp. 67, 75, 77, 91, 96; vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 37, p. 23.
[8] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 19. 100, p. 80.

distances in general terms, as, a distance of an arrowshot;[9] the distance which a rider can cover in forty days on a swift horse;[10] the length of a riding circuit;[11] the length of a row of fourteen houses,[12] or a distance equal to the length and breadth of the earth.[13]

**Lineal measures.** Several parts of the body, from the top joint of the little finger to the height of the whole body of a man, were commonly used for designating the length and breadth, height and depth of objects. Thus, the length of the top joint of the smallest finger, the fore-finger, the middle-finger, the rib, the arm, or the full length of a man's body, were named to designate various sizes.[14] Knee-long, and the length from the foot to the middle of the thigh, are further examples of the use of the parts of a man's leg to designate various lengths.[15] A ploughshare's length is spoken of with reference to the sacred Baresman twig.[16] The texts mention four technical terms of length, of which *vitasti* has a definite measure of a span of twelve fingers, and the others *frārāthni, frābāzu,* and *vibāzu* are measures of unknown equivalences.[17]

The measure of the tiniest object is designated by comparing it to the thickness of a hair.[18] The fist of a man's hand is similarly mentioned as a measure of thickness[19] The thickness of a brick,[20] of a barley-stalk,[21] and of the body of a horse[22] are also mentioned. The height of a fore-arm, or fore-shoulder, or that between a man's foot and his ear,[23] several fingers deep,[24] or a fraction of a finger deep,[25] or ankle deep, knee deep, waist deep, and a man's full depth,[26] a hundred times, and a thousand times

[9] YtZ. 43, 44.
[10] Ys 65. 4; Yt. 5. 4, 101; 13. 7; Bd. 13. 2; Zsp 6. 8.
[11] Vd. 2. 25, 33.
[12] Vd. 15. 45.
[13] Ys. 19. 7; 71. 15.
[14] Vd. 6. 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 43; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8 19. 143, pp. 85, 86.
[15] Ys. 57. 5.
[16] Vd. 19 19; Nr., bk. 2. 24. 1.
[17] Vd. 7. 29, 30, 33, 34; 8. 76-78; 9. 2.
[18] Yt. 14. 29; 16. 7.
[19] Yt. 14 33; 16. 13; Bd. 19. 31.
[20] Vd. 13. 30, 37.
[21] Vd. 19. 19; Nr., bk. 2. 24. 1.
[22] Yt 8. 5.
[23] AfrG. 5.
[24] Vd. 2. 22, 9. 6, 7, 9, 10; 17. 5.
[25] Vd. 17. 7.
[26] Vd. 6. 27.

the height of a man are the expressions used to designate various depths.[27]

**The system of numeration.** The Kianians had in use the cardinal, ordinal, multiple and fractional numbers. The largest number for which a technical word occurs is 10,000, although the highest number commonly mentioned in a comprehensive sense, is 99,999.[28] In writing the composite numbers the lesser numeral always precedes the greater, and the order is continued throughout. For example, the number 99,999 is written and read, 'nine, and ninety, and nine hundred, and nine thousand, and ninety thousand.' Indefinitely large numbers are expressed, by such phrases as, the fifties and hundreds, nine hundreds and thousands, and tens of thousands, or by saying, many and many hundreds, many and many thousands, many and many tens of thousands, or again by a hundred times a hundred, a thousand times a thousand, ten thousand times ten thousand, or by the extreme term, myriads of myriads.[29] An indefinitely large number is expressed also by comparing it to the number of the hairs on a man's head.[30]

**Quantitative values.** The different grades of contracts, as we have seen in the section on contracts, are denoted by naming them after various objects, and assigning graded values to them. Thus the first contract which is transacted by means of pledging one's word, is called a 'word contract,' and has a specific value. A higher contract than this, is negotiated by one party striking his hand upon the hand of the other party, and is termed a 'hand contract.' Similarly, the other contracts have the assigned values of a sheep, an ox, a man, or a field respectively.[31] In discussing the comparative values between two objects, the greatness of one over the other is expressed by declaring it to be ten, or a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand times higher than the other, or by speaking of it as being as much higher than the other, as the whole earth, or as all that is between the earth and the heavens.[32] The glory of the waters of Ardvi Sura is said to be as much as that of the whole of the waters upon the surface of

[27] Yt. 5. 96, 102, 121; 12. 24; 14. 29; 16. 7; Vd. 4. 52.
[28] Yt. 13. 59-62; Vd. 22. 2, 6, 9, 15.
[29] Vsp. 8. 1; Yt. 4. 2; 5 54, 58, 117, 120; 8. 61; 9. 31; 10. 43; 13. 48, 64, 65; 14. 53; 17. 51; 24. 19; Vd. 7. 55, 56.
[30] Yt. 5. 77.
[31] Vd. 4. 1-16.
[32] Yt. 10. 106, 107; 21. 5-17.

the earth.[33] The man who marries and labours for his family, is higher in virtue than a celibate who fasts, by the worth of an *asperena,* or by that of a sheep, an ox, or of a man.[34] The Guardian Spirits of the dead are implored to bestow upon their survivors riches, as wide-spread as the earth, as vast as the rivers, and as high as the sun.[35]

[33] Yt. 5. 96, 102, 121.
[34] Vd. 4. 48.
[35] Ys. 60. 4.

# CHAPTER XXII

## CALENDAR

**Seasonal divisions.** The worst of the plagues introduced by Angra Mainyu in Airyana Vaejah, the stem-land of the Aryans, was, it is said, the deadly winter which chilled the living creation to the bone, and made the land uninhabitable. As the Iranians descended southward, the rigours of the biting winter abated; and later, in the time of the Avestan compositions, they lived in a bracing and genial climate. Yet, the memory of the severest winter that had desolated the habitations of their early ancestors, still lingered. The writer of the Vendidad thus refers to the year, in which winter lasted for ten months, and the summer for only two months.[1] Nature emerged almost dead from the grip of deadly winter, but revived at the vernal equinox. But even this short interval of warm weather, it is said, was cold for the waters, the earth, and the plants.[2] At a later period, when the Iranians settled amid more temperate climate, the year came to be reckoned with a summer of seven months, and a winter of five months.

Six sacred feasts celebrating the seasonal changes of a year came into vogue soon after the Avestan people settled down to agricultural pursuits in their new home. These are called the *gāhanbārs,* and are as follows: *maidhyoizaremaya,* 'mid-spring,' which lasted for 45 days, *maidhyoishema,* 'mid-summer,' which continued for 60 days, *paitishhahya,* 'corn-bearing,' which extended over 75 days, *ayāthrima,* 'home-returning,' which lasted for 30 days, *maidyāirya,* 'mid-year,' which lasted for 80 days, and *hamaspathmaedaya,* which has an uncertain meaning, extended to a period of 75 days. These six seasonal periods of varying duration made up 365 days of a year.

**The year.** The words commonly used to denote the year are *yāre* and *saredha.* The period of the year is also designated by substituting the words *zima,* and *aiwi-gāma,* 'winter,'[3] or

[1] Vd. 1. 4; Mkh. 44. 19. [2] Mkh. 44. 20.
[3] Yt. 9. 10; 15. 12; 19. 29; Vd. 2. 8, 12, 16, 20, 41; 5. 10, 42.

*zaremaya,* 'spring,'[4] in place of either of these words for year. The number of years in this case is denoted by speaking of an equivalent number of winters or springs. The Iranian year in remote times must have been a lunar year, calculated after the twelve revolutions of the moon around the earth. The year was thus divided into twelve months of thirty days each. We have no means of determining the process through which the people were led to substitute the solar for the lunar year. Tradition, as already noted, credits King Yima with inaugurating the reform. At some unknown period, the five days, known to the present time by the names of the five Gathic hymns of Zarathushtra, were intercalated at the end of the twelfth month, to complete the three hundred and sixty-five days of the solar year. This made the year still about a quarter day short of the exact solar year, and a sixth additional day, as found in the later Pahlavi texts, was added every fourth year, or an extra month was intercalated every 120 years.

**The month.** The word for the month is *māonghah,* which also signifies the moon. The names of the months of the year, as preserved in their later forms, are taken from those of the heavenly beings. The month is divided after the movements of the moon in six parts of five days each. The first two of these bear the names which signify the new-moon days, and the full-moon days, and the third group comprises the eleventh to the fifteenth day, and are invoked in the litany to the moon. The names of the last three groups of the second half of the month are not mentioned.

**The day.** The thirty days of a month take for their designations the names of Ahura Mazda, his archangels and angels. The first, eighth, fifteenth, and twenty-third days of each month are also named after Ahura Mazda, thus dividing the month into four periods, the first two of seven days each, and the last two of eight days each. The day called *asnya* or *ayara,* is divided into five watches called *gāhs.* These are *hāvani* from sunrise to noon, *rapithwina* from noon to 3 p.m., *uzayeirina* from the middle of the afternoon to twilight, *aiwisrūthrima* from twilight to midnight, and *ushahina* from midnight to dawn. The night *khshapan* seems to have been divided into *hufrāshmodāiti,* extending from sunset to darkness, *erezaurvaesha,* from darkness

[4] Vd. 18. 9.

to midnight, *ushām sūrām,* from midnight to grey dawn, and *raocanhām fragati,* from grey dawn to sunrise.[5]

**The Kianians had no fixed era.** The Pishdadians had no fixed era, upon which they could base a continuous scheme of chronology. The Kianians could have improved upon this condition, for they had the opportunity to inaugurate an era after the prophet Zarathushtra. This was not done, and we find among them the method of reckoning events after the regnal years of individual kings. This system is greatly detrimental to the construction of a consecutive history, and the difficulty is further aggravated by the fact that the lengths of some of the reigns of the Kianian Kings are wholly unreliable. Though the extravagant length of the reign of seven hundred to a thousand years of Yima, or five hundred years of King Thraetaona credited to the monarchs of the first dynasty, are not met with in the case of the kings of the Kianian dynasty, yet the uncertainty of the regnal years has not altogether left us, when, for example, we read that Vishtaspa, the patron king of the prophet, ruled for a hundred and twenty years.

[5] Cf. Gray, *Persian Calendar,* in ERE. 3. 129.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

**Sacred garments.** Among the different garments which are mentioned in the texts, the most prominent place is given to the white sacred shirt worn next to the skin by every Zoroastrian, and to the girdle tied over it around the waist. Tradition credits King Yima with the introduction of this dress, as a distinguishing sign of the Iranian people,[1] but it was later adopted by the Zoroastrians as the characteristic costume of the faithful.[2] Children of either sex assumed these garments on completing their childhood, or, in general, at the age of fifteen, the age indicated by the Avestan writers as the proper time of puberty.[3] The shirt was made of cotton, as also of other materials, and the texts explain that it was to be made just so long, that a man working in a standing position would not be inconvenienced by it.[4] It had short sleeves, and usually descended to the knees. The girdle was generally made of wool, or of the hair of goats or camels.[5] It consisted of seventy-two filaments, and was wound about the waist in three strings, with two knots in the front, at the second round, and two in the rear, at the close of the third round.

**Ordinary garments.** Kings and courtiers according to the Shah Namah wore elaborate costumes, made of the costliest materials, and wrought with beautiful designs. Garments of silk with elegant fringes, tassels, and rich mantles were used by nobles and warrior chiefs.[6] Tunics made of cloth embroidered with gold and ornamented with jewels, were worn by kings and princes on state occasions.[7] Robes of honour made of the cloth of gold, were the most frequent of the royal gifts bestowed upon distinguished persons of the country. The dress of the ordinary

[1] Dd. 39. 22, 23.
[2] Ys. 9. 26; Yt. 1. 17; Vd. 18. 9, 19, 21; YtZ. 75; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 26. 8; 37. 25, 26; pp. 11, 43, 44.
[3] Vd. 14. 15.
[4] Nr., bk. 3. 1. 5, 8-10.
[5] Nr., bk. 3. 1. 11, 12, 13, 18.
[6] Nr., bk. 3. 4. 1, 2, 4.
[7] ShN. 4. 323; 5. 182, 310.

people was usually a tunic, made of cloth or leather, with a belt or girdle over it.

Royal persons and courtiers used girdles made of rich cloth, embroidered with silver or gold, and ornamented with precious stones.[8] Warriors, likewise, girded their loins with strong girdles.[9] The angel Sraosha is represented as having a girdle around his waist, when he goes to combat the demons.[10] Among other angels, Anahita has girded her waist,[11] and Vayu wears a girdle of gold.[12]

People usually wore sheep-skin caps or turbans. A skull-cap was always worn at home, as moving about bareheaded had early come to be regarded as impious. Except while bathing, when the cap had to be removed, the head was covered day and night.

Similarly, from the early times, the people were enjoined not to walk unshod. Shoes and sandals were worn by men and women.[13] Angels are depicted as wearing shoes. Anahita, for example, puts on shoes that reach to her ankles,[14] and Vayu has golden shoes on.[15] We have already seen that distinguished warriors enjoyed the privilege of wearing golden shoes, or shoes embroidered with gold.[16]

**Significance of garments of different colours.** From early times white has been regarded as symbolic of purity. Chisti, the genius of wisdom, puts on a white dress.[17] According to the later Persian writers, Zarathushtra himself wore a white robe.[18] Prince Syavarshan donned white garments, when he submitted to the fire ordeal to vindicate his character.[19] Royal garments and military costumes were exchanged for white raiments by kings and warriors, when they offered prayers to Ahura Mazda, whether in the fire-temple, or upon the battlefield.[20] The Shah Namah represents the early Iranians as using garments of black

[8] ShN. 2. 36; 3, 296, 299; 4. 62, 318.
[9] ShN. 3. 335, 356; 4. 261; 5. 274.
[10] Ys. 57. 30.
[11] Yt. 5. 64, 78, 126, 127.
[12] Yt. 15. 57.
[13] Vd. 6. 27.
[14] Yt. 5. 64, 78.
[15] Yt. 15. 57.
[16] ShN. 2. 406; 3. 32, 38; 4. 146, 180.
[17] Yt. 10. 126.
[18] See Yohannan, *Some passages in Persian Literature relating to Zoroaster*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 152, n. 5, 153, Bombay, 1908.
[19] ShN. 2. 219.
[20] ShN. 4. 259, 274.

and blue colour for mourning.[21] Tishtrya, the rain star, assumes the form of a white horse, when he encounters Apaosha, the demon of drought, who appears as a black horse.[22] White horses draw the chariot of Sraosha.[23] On the death of a person, his corpse was washed and arrayed in white garments. The corpse-bearers, likewise, were clad entirely in white.

With the establishment of a separate sacerdotal class, the dress of the priests assumed a distinctive form, differing from that of the laity. A white long tunic reaching to the ankles, with a white turban, constituted the priestly dress.

**Ornaments.** Gold is the metal most frequently mentioned in the Avestan texts. It was the chief material, from which ornaments were made. Anahita, we learn, wears golden ear-rings and necklace,[24] and Vayu puts on a golden necklace, and his helm, crown, garment, shoes, and girdle are all made of gold.[25] Women who are favoured of Ashi, the genius of fortune, have ear-rings of gold for their ears, golden necklaces to adorn their necks, and golden anklets upon their feet.[26] Men seem to have shared the privilege of decorating their bodies with jewels, generally the special prerogative of the gentler sex. Chief among the ornaments used by men were ear-rings,[27] necklaces,[28] and armlets.[29] These jewels, in the cases of royal and opulent persons, were inlaid with pearls, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones.[30] Persia has been known from ancient times for the most celebrated turquoise mines of the world, and the signet-rings were usually made of this material, or of gold.[31]

[21] ShN. 2. 338; 4. 271; 5. 278.
[22] Yt. 8. 18, 20, 21, 26, 27.
[23] Ys. 57. 27.
[24] Yt. 5. 127.
[25] Yt. 15. 57.
[26] Yt. 17. 10, 11.
[27] ShN. 2. 30, 402; 3. 31, 243, 267, 296; 4. 362; 5. 45, 242; 6. 49.
[28] ShN. 2. 30.
[29] ShN. 2. 125, 402; 3. 31, 296; 4. 294; 5. 31, 45, 242, 310; 6. 39.
[30] ShN. 3. 31.
[31] ShN. 3. 340, 341.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## DOMESTIC ANIMALS

**Classes of animals.** The Avestan texts divide animals belonging to the good creation into five distinct classes.[1] They are those that live in the waters, those that live upon land, those that fly, those that are wild, and those that have the hoof cloven.[2] The other main division that runs throughout the later texts, is between the good animals, created by Ahura Mazda for the benefit of the world, and the noxious creatures, created by Angra Mainyu for its destruction. Man domesticates and rears the animals belonging to the first group, but he has to wage incessant war, as we shall see later, against the creatures of Angra Mainyu, in order to extirpate them from the earth.

Cruelty to animals, unnecessary beating, plucking of feathers of birds, or wantonly injuring them, catching fishes in a manner which would make them unfit for eating, were punishable wrongs, according to the texts.[3]

### Cattle

**The rearing of cattle.** The cow or ox is represented in the Gathas as the genius of all animal life, and the title Fashioner of the Cow is frequently applied to the godhead.[4] The moon is usually spoken of as possessing the seed of the bull. Cows and oxen, sheep and goats formed the chief property of the Avestan people, and the possession of herds of cattle formed their paramount wish. Cows, she-goats, and ewes gave them milk for food, the hair of the goat was useful to them in weaving fabrics, and the wool of the sheep for making warm garments. Oxen were employed in ploughing the fields, for carrying loads, and for drawing wagons.[5] The rearing of cattle was carried along

[1] Yt. 13. 10, 43, 44; 19. 69.
[2] Vsp. 1. 1; Yt. 8. 36, 48; 13. 74.
[3] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 23. 1-4, 6, 7, pp. 5, 6.
[4] Ys. 29. 2; 31. 9; 46. 9.
[5] ShN. 4. 232, 254.

extensively, and the man who neglected to improve the breed, by giving strong and healthy males to his cows, was liable to punishment.[6]

## Dog

**The importance of the dog.** The dog is the closest companion that man has secured for himself from the animal kingdom, since he began domesticating animals in primitive times. Zoroastrian Persia has, throughout its entire history, honoured the dog, as he has been honoured in no other country in the world. The dog was an indispensable member in every Iranian household,[7] and played an important part in the religious and domestic life of the people. The dog figures in the sacred texts oftener than any other animal.

In addition to the considerable portion of the Vendidad, which treats of the dog, the Dubasrujid Nask, now lost, is said to have contained several sections devoted to discussing him.[8]

The dog was the constant companion of man during life, and the rules relating to defilement caused by the dead frequently contain simultaneous reference to the corpse of a man and that of a dog.

**The different kinds of dogs.** The texts speak of at least ten varieties of dogs, among which the shepherd dog was believed to be possessed of the greatest natural intelligence, and occupied the first place of importance.[9] The dog that watched the house of his master stood second in the list. The most sacred dog, however, was a yellow dog with four eyes, that is, with two spots above the eyes, or a white dog with yellow ears.[10] Besides the several kinds of domesticated dogs, the texts refer to the wild dogs, which devoured the corpses of the dead in early times.[11] The Vendidad speaks of certain classes of dogs, who do not watch and work, but simply live in pursuit of their own food.[12]

**The dog as the sacred animal.** Apart from the multifarious uses in the daily life of the people, the dog's presence was essen-

[6] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 16, 17; 40. 11-14, 16, pp. 21, 57, 58.
[7] Vd. 13. 49.
[8] Dk., vol. 16, bk 8 22. 1, p. 1.
[9] Vd. 5. 29, 34; 7. 8, 9; 13. 2-4, 8, 16.
[10] Vd. 8. 16-18.
[11] Vd. 6. 45-47; 7. 3, 29, 30, 33, 34; 8. 10, 36, 37, 98, 99.
[12] Vd. 13. 19.

tial in some important ceremonials, as is the case to this day. Not only is the dog held sacred, but his gaze on a polluted object is believed to remove the demon of defilement. The dog's presence forms an essential part in the ritual for giving purification to a man, who is defiled by the dead.[13] The road along which a corpse is carried, is said to be purified by the passing of a four-eyed dog.[14] The dog is made to throw his efficacious glance at a corpse, before it is removed to its final resting place.[15] Mythical dogs are said to guard the Bridge of Judgment, which leads to the other world.[16]

**His work.** The chief function of this highly valued companion of man, according to the canine texts, is to keep a vigilant watch over man's property. No thief or wolf can escape detection, we are told, when a man's possessions are under the watch of a good dog.[16a] When a shepherd, in pastoral Iran, was satisfied with the fitness of his dog to perform the duty of watching, he put him in charge of his flocks.[17] He was placed in charge of a sheepfold, where he actively guarded the sheep, and raised an alarm, as soon as his ever watchful eye saw a thief or a wolf attempting to break in the fold.[18] As the constant guardian of the sheep, the dog was supposed to know every one of his flock, and to recognize which particular young ones belonged to their respective mothers.[19] The dog had to look to the safety of his flock, even in rough weather, and was expected to save as many of the best sheep, as he could, when suddenly they were overtaken by storms and floods.[20] During the daytime, he tended his master's flocks, took them to the pasture ground, prevented any sheep from leaving the field or from intruding in a neighbour's grounds.[21] At night, however, his work was more arduous and exacting. He had to pass his nights sleepless, no bedding, pillow, or any kind of comfort was given him, and he was expected to take a full round three times on all sides of the

[13] Vd. 8. 37, 38.
[14] Vd. 8. 16-18.
[15] Vd. 7. 3.
[16] Vd. 13. 9; 19. 30.
[16a] Vd. 13. 39, 40.
[17] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22 1, 2, p 1.
[18] Vd. 13. 10, 11, 17, 18.
[19] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22 6, 7, p. 2.
[20] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 8, p. 2.
[21] Dk, vol. 16, bk 8. 22. 10, 13, p. 3.

fold, when the cattle were asleep.[22] He was liable to punishment for any negligence on his part in the performance of his duty.[23] Excessive beating, however, which makes a dog dumb, or renders him unfit for work, made the owner himself liable to punishment.[24]

Besides watching the possessions of his master in the house, and guarding his flocks in the fold and field, the dog's service was incalculable on the caravan routes, which were infested by the robbers and brigands who stealthily watched for their opportunity to waylay travellers.

**Qualities of dogs.** The prime virtue with which the dog has been endowed by Ahura Mazda, is watchfulness and sleeplessness.[25] Like a priest, says the Vendidad, he keeps his wants ever few, satisfies himself with what little food he gets, and makes contentment his special characteristic.[26] He is a stalwart among his foes, and, like an intrepid warrior, marches in front of his flock and fights in defence of cattle.[27] Ever diligent as a husbandman, he sleeps little, and is the first to leave his master's house in the morning and the last to return at night.[28] Possessed of virtues as he is, he is not free from faults. For it is said that his mind is fickle like that of a courtesan, and he is fond of singing and of roaming about on the streets.[29] Besides, like a thief, he sometimes takes to stealing, and longs for darkness to come that he may steal his master's food.[30] He is, moreover, full of pranks like a child.[31]

**Feeding the dogs.** It was the duty of man to give wholesome food to dogs for the valuable services which they rendered him.[32] If a shepherd who required sufficient work from his watch dog, neglected to give him food for three consecutive days, the dog was held justified, if, on the fourth day, he killed a sheep from his master's flock, and made it his food.[33] If a sheep in the

[22] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 5, p. 2.
[23] Dk., vol. 16, bk 8 22, 9, 18, pp 2, 3, 4.
[24] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 23. 5, p. 5.
[25] Vd. 13. 39.
[26] Vd. 13. 45.
[27] Vd. 13. 45.
[28] Vd. 13. 46.
[29] Vd. 13. 46, 48.
[30] Vd. 13. 47.
[31] Vd. 13. 48.
[32] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 3, 4; 36. 1, pp. 1, 32.
[33] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 15, pp. 3, 4.

fold fell ill, and the master thought of slaughtering it for his food, it was his duty not to forget to give the dog in his yard a proper share of the flesh.[34] To offer unwholesome food to the dogs of different kinds, was equivalent to the wrong of serving bad food to men and women of different ranks in society.[35] The penalty for such ill-feeding of dogs ranged between fifty and two hundred stripes with the two whips, in accordance with the high or low quality of the dogs.[36]

**The care of the dogs.** As the dog was so indispensable a member of the household, and so valuable an asset to the agricultural people of the Kianian period, he was nourished with great care, and accorded kind treatment. In time of excessive winter, his master was bound to provide him with warm bedding and fire.[37] In case of sickness, it was the duty of his master to procure the services of a veterinary surgeon, and have the dog properly treated.[38]

A dog known to be mad, was to have the same care as an insane man.[39] If all attempts to cure him with medicine failed,[40] a wooden collar was to be put around his neck, and he was to be muzzled.[41] If this precaution was not taken, and the dog injured himself by a fall in the waters, the owner incurred the guilt.[42] If the dog injured a sheep or a man by biting, he was to lose his right ear for the first bite, and to receive similar punishments, until at the fifth bite, his tail was to be cut off.[43] The Avestan texts do not speak of killing him, and opinions on the propriety of killing him seem to have been divided, even among the Pahlavi commentators of the later period.[44]

**The breeding of the dogs.** The breeding of such a useful animal as the dog was regarded as a work of great religious merit.[45] To ensure the strong breed, a bitch was to be covered by three dogs in a specially prepared part of the fold.[46] The

[34] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 16, p. 4.
[35] Vd. 13. 20-23.
[36] Vd. 13. 24-27
[37] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 22. 3, 4, p. 1.
[38] Vd. 14. 17; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 32. 4, p. 25.
[39] Vd. 13. 35.
[40] Vd. 13. 36.
[41] Vd. 13. 29, 30, 37.
[42] Vd. 13. 38.
[43] Vd. 13. 31-34.
[44] Phl. Vd 13. 35; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 32. 1, p. 25.
[45] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 30. 19, p. 21.
[46] Vd. 15. 46-49.

man whose house happened to be nearest the spot, on which was found a bitch nearing her time, was bound to support her. In fact, the texts mention several places, like the stables of camels, horses, or oxen, the folds of sheep, compound walls, or pasture fields, and declares that if in any such place a bitch was discovered in such a condition, the owner was bound to take her at once into his care, and support her, until her whelps were born. Neglect on the part of the owner of a place on which such a bitch came to travail, made him liable to the penalty of wilful murder.[47] The supporter of the bitch had to provide her and her young ones with bedding of grass or foliage, and to feed them until the time that the pups could run about at the age of six months, which, according to the texts, is the age when young dogs are capable of self-defence and self-subsistence.[48]

**Penalty for the ill-treatment of dogs.** Strict injunctions are laid down against wantonly injuring a dog. In addition to the punishment that an injurer of a dog suffers in this world, his soul suffers after his death at the Bridge of Judgment.[49] If a man injured a shepherd dog, cut off his ear or paw, so that he was disabled from his work, and a thief or a wolf, in the meantime, entered the fold, he was bound to make good the loss to the dog's master, and also incurred the penalty for wilfully wounding the dog.[50] One who killed dogs of different kinds, was liable to a graded punishment of twice five hundred to a thousand stripes, according to the value or quality of the dogs.[51] An exceptionally severe penalty is prescribed for one, who killed a water dog. The enormity of the offence is to be seen from the fact that ten thousand stripes with the two goads, the task of killing of several thousand noxious creatures, or the performance of several different acts of charity by the guilty person to expiate the crime, were indispensable to secure his absolution from guilt.[52]

## The Horse

**His work among the celestial beings.** The horse occupies an important place in the sacred literature of Ancient Iran. He is the symbol of the sun, whose standing epithet is the 'swift-

[47] Vd. 15. 20-42.
[48] Vd. 15. 43-45.
[49] Vd. 13. 8, 9.
[50] Vd. 13. 10, 11.
[51] Vd. 13. 3, 4, 12-16; 15. 50, 51.
[52] Vd. 14. 1-18.

horsed one.' Apam Napat, a secondary genius of water, takes the same title.[53] Some of the angels yoke teams of horses to their chariots, when they go upon their rounds in the heavenly regions. The horses that draw the chariots of the heavenly beings, are said to be four in number, and they are of white colour, shining, tall, with hoofs shod with gold or silver, and are swifter than any beings upon the earth or in the heavens.[54] When Tishtrya encounters the demon of drought, they assume, as we have already seen, the shape of white and black horses respectively.[55] Verethraghna, likewise, assumes the shape of a white horse.[56]

**His services upon earth.** The Iranians were acquainted with the horse from very early times. The kings used horses for drawing their chariots, and rode them to the chase. The warriors fought on horseback, and the people used the horse as a riding animal. The work of breeding horses for cavalry, and for other uses, was extensively carried on. The horse seems to be the most popular animal, as men frequently derived their names from the Avestan word, *aspa*, 'horse.' The most notable examples in point, are those of Pourushaspa, the father of the prophet, and Vishtaspa, his royal patron. Warriors prayed to the angels for swift horses.[57] When the Guardian Spirits are propitiated, they bless the houselord with the gift of a swift horse,[58] and Ashi fills the houses and kingdoms of those whom she favours, with rich and swift horses.[59]

Snorting and well-neighing, wide-hoofed, and with quivering nostrils, are among some of the qualifications of the horse spoken of in the texts.[60] The horse, it is said, possesses such powerful eyesight, that, in the darkness of night, he can perceive a horse's hair lying on the ground, and can make out whether it has fallen from the head or from the tail.[61]

Wild horses were caught in mountainous districts, and men were warned not to injure them by reckless catching.[62] A man clever at throwing a lasso, usually rode a horse with a long

[53] Ys. 2. 5; 65. 12, 13; 70. 6; Yt. 5. 72.
[54] Ys 57. 27-29; Yt. 5. 13, 120, 10. 52, 68, 76, 125, 136.
[55] Yt. 8. 8, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27, 30, 46.
[56] Yt. 14. 9.
[57] Ys. 9. 22; Yt. 5. 98; 10. 3, 11, 94, 114.
[58] Yt. 13. 52.
[59] Yt. 17. 7, 12.
[60] Yt. 5. 130; 10. 47. 113.
[61] Yt. 14. 31; 16. 10.
[62] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 40, p. 56.

rope in hand, and chased wild horses, until he succeeded in throwing the loop of the rope over the head of a horse.[63] The wild horses were given to trainers, who took them to the training grounds, situated at a certain distance from the towns, and prepared them for domestic service.[64] Cruelty or ill-treatment of a horse, or keeping him in a filthy part of the house, were wrongs for which the owner was liable to punishment.[65] The horse, we read, curses the rider who does not give him proper food.[66]

## The Camel

**The chief pack animal of Iran.** Among the many etymological derivations proposed to explain the name Zarathushtra, is the one, which suggests *ushtra,* 'camel,' from the second element of the compound word. The animal employed to carry heavy loads across the country, was the camel. Firewood was brought to the towns and villages from the jungles by caravans of camels.[67] An immense train of camels was indispensable for carrying war materials to the battlefield, and for bringing the spoils from the country of a vanquished enemy.[68] Besides being used as a beast of burden, the camel was also used for riding. The long hair of the camel was cut off every year,[69] and was woven into cloth. The camel is described in the sacred texts, as possessed of four stout legs, well-kneed and well-footed, stout-humped, of shaggy eyes, of quick movements of head, tall, courageous, of glance far seeing in darkness, throwing white foam from the mouth, and possessing the look of an all-powerful sovereign.[70] As the animal had such manifold uses, both in peace and in war, the breeding of its species was carried on extensively by the people.[71]

## The Elephant

**The royal animal.** The Avestan texts do not mention this royal animal, but the Shah Namah is full of references to his

[63] ShN. 3. 26.
[64] Dk., vol 16, bk. 8. 37. 23, p. 43
[65] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 45, p. 58; vol. 16, bk. 8. 26. 5; 37. 39, pp. 11, 45.
[66] Ys. 11. 1, 2.
[67] ShN. 2. 219.
[68] ShN. 4. 232.
[69] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 15, p. 58.
[70] Yt. 14. 11-13.
[71] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 40. 11-14, 16, 17, pp. 57-59.

use, both in the time of peace as well as in that of war. In private life, the use of the elephant was restricted to the royal household. Finely caparisoned elephants led the van in the royal processions. The animal was likewise employed in fighting.[72] The archers, as we have seen in previous pages, were usually stationed on elephants.[73] The king often mounted an elephant, and witnessed the fighting from its back.[74] Drums and tymbals were bound on elephants, when the army left for war.[75] Sometimes the elephant was employed as a beast of burden to bring the booty from the battlefield.[76]

## The Cock

**The herald of dawn.** Among the domestic birds, the cock was the most sacred. As the admonisher of mankind to discard sloth, and to wake up early to lead an industrious life, he is the ally of the ever-wakeful Sraosha. At break of day the cock flaps his wings and crows aloud, to awaken mankind. Bushyansta, the demon of sloth, who desires to keep people wrapped in slumber, even after the morning has dawned upon the earth, kisses their eyelids and lulls them to sleep again. When men rise at early hours, they deal a death blow to the world of idleness. It is a virtue inculcated by the prophet, and the bird that raises its clarion voice of warning against undue sleep, and calls them to work, was greatly valued by the Iranians.[77] The gift of these birds to the pious, is declared to be a highly meritorious act.[78]

## Noxious Creatures

**Merit of extirpating noxious creatures that injure the living.** As it is the sacred duty of the faithful to work for the propagation of all species of good animals, so is he bound to strive for the destruction of the noxious creatures, that infest the earth. One of the sacred implements that a priest usually handled is called the *khrafstraghna,* 'the killer of noxious creatures.'[79] Convict labour, in early Iran, was utilized in destroying noxious

[72] ShN. 2. 153; 5. 55.
[73] ShN. 4. 147, 179; 5. 277.
[74] ShN. 2. 407; 3. 31, 32; 4. 13, 16, 145.
[75] ShN. 2. 148, 227; 3. 31, 334; 5. 45.
[76] ShN. 3. 353.
[77] Vd. 18. 15, 16, 23, 24, 26
[78] Vd. 18. 28.
[79] Vd. 14. 8; 18. 2.

creatures, and wrong-doers were often ordered by the courts of law to kill specified numbers of them. Also one mode of expiating sins was to destroy such evil creatures.[80] Wolves, snakes, flies, insects, and harmful germs were among some of the chief creatures, against which the faithful are enjoined to wage a relentless warfare.[81] The one evil creature which is execrated more than any other, as being the most injurious pest, and the recognized source of contagion and death among the living, is the fly.[82]

[80] Vd. 14. 5, 6; 16. 12; 18. 73.
[81] Vd. 1. 3, 7, 15; 7. 26; 16. 12; 17. 3; 18. 65; Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 42. 28a, p. 67.
[82] Vd. 7. 2, 3, 5; 8. 16-18, 69-71; 9. 24, 25; 14. 6.

## CHAPTER XXV

## FOOD AND DRINK

**Eating and fasting.** The teachings of Zarathushtra, as we have seen, bred an active and militant spirit in the bone and marrow of every Zoroastrian. Therefore, a strong and vigorous body was indispensable, to enable the faithful to lead a strenuous life. The man who abstains from food, or takes insufficient food, we are informed, has neither strength enough to practise active virtues, nor can he till the earth, nor beget children, nor is he able to withstand hardship and pain.[1] It is for this reason, that fasting never formed a part of even the most solemn religious occasions of the Zoroastrian faith. Thus, among the great religions of the world, Zoroastrianism stands alone, in that, it has no fast days in its calendar.

**The daily fare of the people.** Barley and wheat formed the staple articles of food. The latter was held to be the best among grains,[2] and the sacrificial cakes were made of the flour of wheat. Barley and wheat were cooked in water, or were ground to flour, and loaves baked in ovens were used as food. Milk of mares, cows, sheep, and goats was most freely used as drink, or was cooked for food.[3] Clarified butter seems to have formed the most valued article of food, and, according to the sacred texts, forms the ambrosia on which the righteous feast in heaven.[4] Those parts of the country, which were blessed with abundant rainfall, or were irrigated by means of water, brought through the canals, grew various kinds of vegetables and fruits, which served as dishes of boiled, cooked, or fried food, and as deserts. Meat was a principal article of diet, and from the earliest times, the Iranians ate the flesh of the goat, the sheep, the deer, the onager, and of several other animals. Meat was either roasted,[5] or cooked, or fried, before eating. Fowls and birds, similarly, formed part of the daily food. Animal food was used in the

[1] Vd. 3. 33; 4. 48, 49.
[2] Nr., bk. 1. 8, App. A. 2.
[3] Vd. 5. 52; 7. 67.
[4] Yt. 22. 18; 24. 64; Aog. 16.
[5] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 23. 9, p. 6.

sacred feasts and festivals, or in funeral repasts. Pazag Nask, we are informed by the Dinkard, dealt with the manner of slaughtering an animal according to the religious rites.[6] The Nirangistan, an elaborate work on ritual, devotes several pages to the discussion in detail, as to the kind, quality, and size of the animal fit for a sacrificial offering, about the manner of slaughtering it, regarding the recital of the sacred formulas, while immolating the victim, about the mode of consecrating and dedicating different parts of the animal to the various heavenly beings, and lastly regarding the way in which to partake of the sacred viands at the close of the ritual. The flesh of an animal, which was sick, or had died a natural death, was not used either for food or for sacrificial purposes. Fish was, likewise, used for food as well as for sacrificial repasts.[7]

**The manner of eating.** People generally sat cross-legged on carpets or mats spread on the floor, and ate with the fingers. This was the practice in the houses of poor people, as also on the occasion of the communal feasts, when the whole town assembled to partake of the sacred meal. Rich people had chairs and tables, on which the food was served.[8] The vessels used for eating were made of various kinds of metal and other materials Dishes and cups made of gold and silver decorated the banquet halls of princes and nobles, and those of brass and copper were in vogue among the other classes of people.[9]

**The use of wine in Ancient Iran.** Tradition, as we have already seen, points to King Yima, as the first discoverer of fermentation of wine and liquor. Historically speaking, the ancient Iranians brought with them the knowledge of making different kinds of liquor, which they possessed in common with their Indo-Aryan neighbours. The chief exhilarating drink which was always prepared ceremonially, and quaffed by the officiating priests in the midst of the Yasna sacrifice was Haoma, the Vedic Soma. Whereas other intoxicating drinks, we are told, lead to excitement and anger with their accompanying evils, this consecrated beverage engenders piety and rectitude.[10] Among the other kinds of liquor used on ordinary occasions were *madhu,* 'mild or sweet

[6] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 6. 1, 2, pp. 12, 13
[7] Nr., bk. 2. 13. 44; 20. 15, 16.
[8] ShN. 3. 19, 31, 268, 355; 4. 318; 5. 197, 210, 211.
[9] Vd. 7. 73-75; 16. 6.
[10] Ys. 10. 8; Yt. 17. 5.

wine,' and *hurā,* 'strong liquor,' corresponding to *madhu* and *surā* of the Vedic Aryans. It is the former that is prescribed, among other things, as a health-giving drink to a woman, who has brought forth a still-born child.[11] On the other hand, at the season festivals, when the entire male population of a place gathered to partake of a communal meal, the strong wine was served.[12] The same quality of liquor was consumed by men on other occasions.[13]

The Shah Namah is full of references of the free use of wine by kings and courtiers, warriors and heroes, at state banquets, sports and hunts, pleasure parties, and on various other occasions. Affairs of small or great importance were often discussed by kings and ministers with the cups of wine in circulation. Wine was served by the cup-bearers, who were richly dressed in coronets and jewels, robes of brocade and silk at royal parties.[14] The royal cups, goblets, and bowls were made of ruby, crystal, and of the other materials.[15] It was the custom at such drinking bouts, to fill the cups of all. Everybody present then raised his cup, and with words of praise and good wishes drank the health of one, whom they wished to honour.[16] The royal health was drunk by all loyal subjects at their private gatherings.[17] Wine was drunk with or without water according to its quality,[18] and we see mighty Rustam asking the cup-bearer at a party not to weaken the old wine by mixing water with it.[19]

[11] Vd. 5. 52-54; 7. 67-69.
[12] AfrG. 4
[13] Vd 14. 17.
[14] ShN. 3. 329, 355.
[15] ShN. 3. 289; 5. 164.
[16] ShN. 2. 110, 141; 3. 36, 273; 4. 257.
[17] ShN. 5. 197, 211
[18] Vd 5. 52; 7. 67.
[19] ShN. 5. 211.

## CHAPTER XXVI

## FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

**Festive occasions.** A considerable number of days in the year were set apart for the celebration of sacred feasts in honour of some celestial beings, for the commemoration of the dead, or for the solemnization of seasonal changes, and of the chief events in the life of the people. The rich and poor alike stopped their daily labours, and kept holiday on such occasions. When a great festival was to be celebrated all the people of villages adjoining a large town, came on the solemn occasion clad in festal attire, and joined their co-religionists of the place in a sacred banquet. Such a festival usually opened with ceremonial observances and devotional exercises. A sacred feast was prepared and the officiating priest invoked the heavenly beings, or the spirit of the dead, to share the feast with the people. Libations of water, milk, melted butter, fruits and flowers, cooked repasts of vegetables, meat, and fish were offered on the occasion. The consecrated food was then eaten ceremonially by all. Some of the great festivals continued for several days, in which case the latter part of the festal period became more an occasion for enjoyment than for religious observances. Games and athletic sports, racing and wrestling were exhibited for the entertainment of the throngs of people gathered for the celebration.

The most prominent of the annual feasts was, of course, the New Year festival, which was handed down by the Pishdadians to the Kianians, who continued to celebrate it with unabated zeal. Some of the other important festivals which the Kianians either inherited from their ancestors, or had established for themselves, will be treated in brief in the following sections.

**The seasonal festivals.** The celebration of seasonal changes was declared to be the pious duty of every Mazda-worshipper. There were six chief agricultural festivals, each lasting for five days, and falling at various intervals during the year. These festivals of the seasons brought the whole community of a large

town or of small villages to a common meal. People generally clothed in white, met together for the offering of the first produce of the fields to the agricultural and seasonal spiritual lords, and for the preparation of a sacrificial repast in their honour. When the priests had recited their thanksgiving prayer and offered the sacred meal to the celestial chiefs of the seasons, the whole assembly feasted upon the consecrated viands, and quaffed the cups of wine. Every member of the community was bound to attend and contribute something to these communal feasts, according to his means. A rich person might devoutly offer a small cattle, and his less fortunate neighbours might derive satisfaction for the fulfilment of their duty by the dedication of wine, or by a gift of fuel in large or small quantities.[1] Any neglect by individuals in the celebration of these solemn festivals was believed to threaten the community with the loss of divine favour and protection. Consequently, those who did not join in the solemnization of the feasts, or neglected to contribute their share, according to their ability, or cared not to partake of the sacred banquet, together with their co-religionists, were punished.[2]

**The festival of Mithra.** One of the most prominent angels, of the celestial hierarchy, who alone shares some of the divine dignities of Ahura Mazda, and who has the longest Yasht dedicated in his honour, is Mithra, the lord of wide pastures. As we have already seen, he occupies the central place in the Zoroastrian calendar, and the first month of the second half period of a year, as well as the first day in the second half period of each month receives his name. A festival extending over six days was celebrated in his honour, and probably fell on the occasion of the autumnal equinox. Tradition joins King Thraetaona's name with its inauguration, and he, we are informed, first celebrated it to commemorate his victory over the usurper king Dahaka.[3] This festival has survived the changes of time, and is still observed amid festal rejoicings.

**The feasts of the dead.** Death deprives men of their bodily vehicle, but, in spite of their disembodied state, the dead are believed to commune in spirit with their dear ones upon earth.

[1] AfrG. 3-6
[2] AfrG. 7-13.
[3] Albiruni, *Chronology*, pp. 207-209; ShN. I. 174, 175.

The last ten days of the year are sacred to the Guardian Spirits of the dead, who visit the earth on this occasion, longing for sacrificial offerings and invocations from their living kinsfolk.[4] The entire population of a place devoutly busied itself in preparing a fitting welcome to the spirits of the dead, who had lived and worked for the communal welfare during their lifetimes. A separate room was provided in every house for the purpose, and the members of every family invoked their ancestral dead with ceremonial gifts. The Guardian Spirits of the dead, who were thus honoured, blessed in their turn, their dutiful kinsmen with flocks of animals and men, horses and chariots, before they wended their way to the heavenly regions, at the close of the festival.[5]

**Feast of the fire.** The feast of the fire, founded by Haoshyangha, as seen in earlier pages, to commemorate his discovery of this priceless element, continued to be observed by the people during the Kianian period.

As the religious life of the people moved round the holy fire of Ahura Mazda, it is natural that the anniversaries of the foundation of some of the great fire-temples were celebrated amid great devotional fervour. Men, women, and children came in throngs, with offerings of fragrant wood and fuel, from different parts of the country, to participate in the solemn festivities, which extended over several days. The temples were gorgeously illuminated at night, and the devout pilgrims from abroad, and the people of the town, filled the streets.

**The festival of waters.** The staple industry of the people of Ancient Iran was agriculture. Angra Mainyu had cursed the country with arid wastes and barren deserts, alongside of Ahura Mazda's mellow earth which bloomed with foliage and vegetation. The rainfall in Iran was generally scanty, and we have already seen from the poetic account of the struggle between Tishtrya, the angel of rain, and Apaosha, the demon of drought, how mighty are the efforts needed by the former to prevent his adversary from thwarting his work of watering the earth.[6] Flocks and herds, men and animals, fishes and birds, all turned their eager eyes to this rain-star, praying for his fertilizing waters, troubled all the time lest their hopes be frustrated, that rains should fail them, and a bad harvest fall to their

[4] Yt. 13. 49, 50. [5] Yt. 13. 51, 52. [6] Yt. 8. 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24.

lot.[7] Strengthened by the sacrificial offerings of mankind, Tishtrya triumphantly hurls back his opponent and shouts hail to waters, plants, and lands.[8] Waters of the sea Vourukasha, the largest volume of water known to the Iranians, are now seen bubbling and boiling,[9] vapours rise up the height of the adjoining mountains,[10] the wind drives the clouds laden with moisture,[11] with the help of the angels and Guardian Spirits of the dead, Tishtrya divides the water,[12] the Iranian countries are blessed with an abundant rainfall, gushing streams run through fields and farms with waves thicker than a horse's body,[13] the thirsting plants now grow with fresh life, and the earth is clad with vegetation.

The conjunction of the day and the month, which bore the name of Tishtrya was consequently consecrated to the rain-star, and an annual festival was observed amid elaborate ritual observances and accompanied by feasting and rejoicing. This feast of the rains is pre-Zoroastrian, and the name of King Mainyuchithra, Minocheher, of the Shah Namah, is associated with its inauguration.[14] Similarly, Anahita, the female genius of waters in general, had her great festival on the day Aban of the month bearing the same name.

[7] Yt. 8. 5, 36, 48.
[8] Yt. 8. 29.
[9] Yt. 8. 31.
[10] Yt. 8. 32.
[11] Yt. 8. 33, 40.
[12] Yt. 8. 34, 47.
[13] Yt. 8. 5, 42.
[14] Albiruni, *Chronology*, pp. 205, 206.

## CHAPTER XXVII

## AMUSEMENTS

**The religious justification of amusements.** Zoroastrianism, we have seen, does not encourage an austere view of life. Man has an instinctive desire for joy, which helps him to relieve the monotony of life. In pleasant amusements he seeks relaxation from the strain of work, entailed upon him by the serious occupations of life. Legitimate pleasure and enjoyment refresh him, stimulate his energy, and enable him to work with renewed vitality. Zarathushtra recognizes this plain truth, and joy, joyful abode, and joyful state of life are expressions frequently met in the sacred texts. Raman, one of the angels in the celestial hierarchy, presides over joy, as the very meaning of his name indicates. The gaiety of temperament of the ancient Iranians, which we glean from the Avestan texts, was due to the cheerful view which the prophet gave them of man's life upon earth.

**Hunting was the chief royal pastime.** Hunting as a means of pleasure, or as an occupation to beguile the time, was most frequent among kings and courtiers, warriors and heroes. The chief weapons generally used in hunting were the bow and arrow, mace, lance, and lasso.[1] Dogs and cheetahs trained to the chase were used to catch big game, and trained falcons were utilized in catching feathered game.[2] Fishing and angling in the waters of rivers, lakes, and oceans, attracted pleasure seekers to their shores. The game animals usually hunted were onagers, gazelles, stags, wild boars, wild goats and sheep, pheasants and water fowls.[3] The Iranians were keen sportsmen, accustomed to return from their hunting excursions with great kills of game. The game that dropped by the hunter's hands, was usually roasted on fire on the spot and eaten. The warrior hero Rustam is often seen gathering sticks, thorns, and dry grass on

[1] ShN. 2. 121.
[2] Vd. 13. 8; ShN. 2. 83, 108, 193, 359; 3. 292, 293, 296; 4. 218.
[3] ShN. 2 45, 47, 108; 3. 244, 293; 5. 184.

the field to kindle fire by striking sparks upon an arrow's point, and roasting an onager for his meal.[4]

**Music and dancing.** Iran, the land of the nightingale, had from early times, her musicians and singers. The Gathas of Zarathushtra, which are composed in measured syllables, were, as the derivation of the term indicates, chanted in rythmic tone. The highest paradise Garonmana means the Abode of Song. Both vocal and instrumental music was a favourite source of amusement from early times. Musicians sang to the piping of flutes, or to the sound of other instruments, or without their accompaniment. Harp and minstrel singers, according to the Shah Namah, formed a common feature at banquets, social gatherings, celebrations of victory, and on all occasions for rejoicing. Dancing probably was an adjunct to music, and the minstrels danced to the beat of tambourine, and to the music of the pipe. Among the instruments most frequently used for entertainment were tambourine, harp, flute, pipe, and drum.

**Games and sports.** As vigour of body and physical prowess were highly valued by the Iranian people, we notice them encouraging all games and sports, which can develop the qualities of patience, endurance, agility, and alertness. Foot-race and horse-race, wrestling on foot and on horseback, throwing javelin and slinging stones, archery and polo, and other exercises of physical strength, were held on festal occasions, amid great enthusiasm, applause, and excitement of the onlookers.[5]

[4] ShN. 2. 45, 47, 121.
[5] ShN. 2. 107, 264-266, 292-295; 4. 317.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## DIVINATION AND SORCERY

**The art of divination enjoyed a great vogue in Iran.** The services of the diviners, or astrologers, were in great demand in the daily life of the Iranians, and no affair of importance was undertaken without consulting them, to determine the favourable or unfavourable movements of the heavens. They noted the hour of a child's nativity, and made search for any inauspicious signs that might have attended its birth. They forecasted the future, interpreted dreams and omens, prepared and read the horoscopes, and generally informed people of the influence of the movements of the heavenly bodies on their affairs. Besides the support that readers of stars received from the general public, the royal patronage was liberally extended to eminent diviners. As seen in former pages, there were regular court astrologers, whose services were demanded for various purposes.[1] They were asked to forecast the destiny of princes,[2] to predict the outcome of an undertaking of consequence,[3] to draw prognostications before embarking upon a war, and to discover whether the signs betoken victory or defeat.[4] Rich as were the gifts with which the kings rewarded the services of the astrologers, the risk of incurring the royal disfavour was quite as great. The wisest of the astrologers, like Jamaspa, of matchless renown, stood in the danger of paying with his life, when his prognostication proved to be unacceptable to his royal master.[5] Sometimes the astrologers were summoned to detect crime and find the truth by divination, when legal proceedings had failed to detect guilty persons.[6] The configuration of the planets in certain positions was believed to portend some calamity, and the diviner's help was considered indispensable on such occasions. A group of

[1] ShN. 2. 23.
[2] ShN. 2. 196, 205.
[3] ShN. 2. 282-284.
[4] YtZ. 35-39, 46-49, 53; ShN. 3. 127, 219; 5. 48-53.
[5] YtZ. 40-42, 51, 52.
[6] ShN. 2. 215-217.

astrologers often sat together, when they had some matters of moment under discussion, and took several days to reach a decision.[7]

**Sorcery is vigorously denounced.** The Iranians of the pre-Zoroastrian period, as also of the times after the coming of the prophet, are known for their relentless warfare against sorcerers and witches. King Takhma Urupi, who flourished ages before the birth of Zarathushtra, is said to have broken the power of those who practised the art of magic.[8] Among the many things created by Angra Mainyu for the harm of mankind, is witchcraft.[9] The world of righteousness is threatened with destruction, where sorcery prevails.[10] Hence every adult undertakes to work diligently for its suppression, and abjures in the recital of the Confession of Faith, all sorcerers and witches.[11] Sorcery was believed to be capable of injuring, as well as of killing a person, on whom it was practised.[12] It was therefore legally declared a capital crime, and the wizard was condemned to death.[13] Wizards, it is said, attempted to bring about the death of the prophet, but they failed in their object.[14] Prayers are offered for the strength to smite sorcerers and witches,[15] and incantations and spells are recited to withstand their evil doings.[16] The lost Nikadum Nask, we are informed, contained several such incantations.[17] Heavenly beings,[18] Guardian Spirits of the dead,[19] and the stars and planets,[20] are invoked to help mankind to withstand the machinations of the magicians. Those expert in the art of divination made themselves still more useful by their ability to detect the sorcerer, and to save the person, against whom the magic is worked.

[7] ShN. 2. 215, 216.
[8] Yt. 19. 28, 29.
[9] Ys. 8. 3; Vd. 1. 14, 15.
[10] Ys. 8. 3; Vd. 18. 55.
[11] Ys. 12. 4; Yt. 2. 11.
[12] Vd. 3. 41; 7. 4; Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 64, 65; 19. 39, pp. 61, 70; vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 1, p. 62.
[13] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8. 41. 1, p. 62.
[14] Yt. 8. 44.
[15] Ys. 9. 18.
[16] Ys. 61. 3; Yt. 3. 5; 11. 6; Vd. 20. 10, 12.
[17] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 8. 18. 46, p. 58.
[18] Ys. 65. 8; Yt. 1. 6; 4. 4; 6. 4; 15. 56; Vd. 8. 80.
[19] Yt. 13. 135
[20] Yt. 8. 12; Sr. 2. 13.

# THE MEDIAN PERIOD

From 708 B.C. to 558 B.C.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## THE MEDES

**The early Aryans of Western Iran.** A strong migratory wave of the Aryan race had penetrated north-western Persia at about 2000 B.C. The new-comers had driven out the indigenous people before them, or had absorbed them, and had settled themselves in the newly acquired possessions. As they gradually advanced southwards, some of their tribes succeeded in founding their dynasties, and ruled over considerable tracts. The Kassites, for example, who spoke an Aryan tongue, rose to power in the Zagros in 1700 B.C., and the Mittani kings, who, according to the Boghaz-keui tablets, recently discovered in Asia Minor, worshipped old Aryan divinities, exercised power in the northern Mesopotamia about 1400 B.C.

By far the most prominent of the Aryan settlers of Western Iran, with whom we are concerned, were the Medes, people of the common ethnic stock with their more illustrious kindred, the Persians, who later replaced them in power. Strabo states that the language of the Medes resembled that of the Persians, Bactrians, and Sogdians.[1] They are first mentioned by their name, Mada or Medes, in the Assyrian inscriptions in the ninth century B.C. According to Herodotus, these hardy mountaineers were divided into six distinct tribes, and long lived an uneventful nomadic existence in the rugged highlands, until Deioces, son of Phraortes, welded the loose congeries of their tribes into a nation.[2] The sixth Median tribe, according to the same writer, was called the Magi. It was the sacred caste, which ministered to the spiritual needs of the Medes, and later formed the priesthood among the Persians. To the classical writers in ancient times their name was synonymous with the wisdom of the East, and the words magic and magician are reminiscent of their fame. With the accession to power of the Medes about 708 B.C., at the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, Aryan domination replaced the Semitic in Western Iran. Ecbatana, the

[1] Strabo 15. 2. 8.

[2] Herod. 1. 96, 101.

Greek form of the Old Persian Hagamatana, 'a meeting place of many ways,' became the capital of the Medes, and the centre from which their civilizing influences radiated during the period of their independent national existence. Their empire, which lasted for about 150 years, extended from the Zagros range, the original seat of their power, to the Caspian Sea in the north, and claimed the provinces of Atropatene, Rhages, Armenia, Cappadocia, Hyrcania, Parthia, and Bactria, as their possessions or tributaries.

**Their racial characteristics.** The Medes possessed a handsome physiognomy and Xenophon tells us that their women were of graceful figure, good stature, and of great beauty.[3] The mode of life imposed upon them by the climate, and the rough and hard life of the mountains, had made the Medes virile. They were a warlike people, and their name had been a terror among all nations.[4] In the early days they lived a frugal life, and it is said that they cared not for silver and delighted not in gold.[5] Growing power and prosperity seem to have later changed the simple and martial habits of the king and nobles. A life of self-indulgence, unbounded luxury, and indolence soon deprived the ruling class of their former virility, and after a life of 150 years, the Median Empire fell into the hands of their sturdy kinsmen, the Persians.

**The Median king and his court.** The king moved with great pomp and dignity, so as to inspire awe and respect among his subjects. He thought it derogatory to his royal position to expose his august person to the vulgar gaze of the people. Thinking thus, that the best way of inspiring reverential awe among the people was to observe aloofness, he secluded himself within the palace walls, and appeared before the public on very rare state occasions, conducting the affairs of the state through his officers, guards, and messengers who attended at the palace gate.[6] The offices which required their holders to approach the king often were mostly given to the eunuchs.[7] The officers who were thus privileged to appear before the king, had to observe strict etiquette, and maintain respectful reserve in their

[3] Xen. *Anab.* 3. 2, 25.
[4] Ezekiel 31. 11, 12.
[5] Isaiah 13. 17.
[6] Herod. 1. 99, 100; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 8.
[7] For ref. see Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 2. 415.

intercourse with the royal master. They could not, for example, laugh or spit in the royal presence.[8] The king took to himself several wives and concubines, who were attended by a multitude of eunuchs, drawn from alien tribes.[9] Trustworthy persons only were entrusted with the work of serving the immediate needs of the king. Futhermore, precautions were taken that none could attempt the life of the king, by poisoning his food and drink. The royal cup-bearer was always required to taste the wine from the cup, before he handed it to his royal master.[10] The king, at times, sought to strengthen his position with a powerful neighbour by uniting his family by marriage with one of the royal stock of his ally. For example, when Cyaxares was conducting his campaign against Assyria, an agreement was made with the king of Babylon, that the Median king should give his daughter in marriage to Nebuchadnezzar, the son of the Babylonian king, who joined Cyaxares to attack Assyria.[11] Similarly, on another occasion, when Cyaxares was engaged in a battle with the Lydians, a sudden eclipse of the sun filled the contending armies with superstitious dread, and peace was soon contracted. It was then arranged that the Lydian king should give his daughter in marriage to Astyages, the son of Cyaxares, to strengthen the bonds of their new friendship. It is interesting to note, that the mutual agreement was solemnized by an oath, in which the Median and the Lydian kings recited a sacred formula, and while doing so, each punctured his own arm and sucked a little blood from the wound of the other.[12]

The royal scribe, we gather, chronicled the edicts and events of the court.[13] Among the officers of various grades attending upon the king, were those who, throughout the Median, as well as Persian period, are famous as the King's Eyes and Ears. Other functionaries of the court were the cup-bearers, chamberlains, and guards. The highest officials were privileged to be the companions of the king at table.[14] It was the custom for the king to entertain his friends on his birthday.[15]

[8] Herod. 1. 99.
[9] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 2. 319.
[10] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 9.
[11] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 2. 394.
[12] *Ib.* 2. 411.
[13] Esther 10. 2; Book of Daniel 6. 9.
[14] For ref. see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 2. 416.
[15] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 10.

The favourite pastime of the king and courtiers was hunting. In this the king took an active part, although he often contented himself with witnessing the sport.[16] The hunting parks, known as paradises, which, as we shall see later, occupy so prominent a place in the pastime of the Achaemenian and Sasanian kings, seem to be of Median origin.[17]

**Warfare.** Herodotus states that the Medes were the first among the Asiatics to introduce order and discipline in the army, which previously fought in a confused mass; to divide the troops in companies, and to form separate corps of footmen, spearmen, archers, and horsemen.[18] The Medes were a race of horse-archers,[19] and the cavalry was the chief source of their strength. Media was famous throughout Asia for its fine breed of horses, known as the Nisaean. As these famous horses were noted for strength, beauty, and speed, so also were the men of the country renowned for their great mastery of horsemanship. Cavalry formed an important part of the Median army.[20] The horses of the king and nobles had their caparisons and harnesses ornamented with gold.[21] The chariots were also used in warfare by the Medes,[22] who are always spoken of as second to the Persians alone in point of valour.[23] Little is known of the arms and armours, as well as of the mode of warfare of the Medes. But Herodotus tells us, that what passed in the Persian period as Persian equipment, was in reality Median.[24] This is better seen in the figures of warriors sculptured on the royal edifices of the Achaemenians, as we shall see in its proper place.

**Dress and ornaments.** Since the Persians adopted the dress of the Medes,[25] the best way to derive an idea of the Median costume is to study the costumes of the figures on the Persian bas-reliefs. Long flowing robes of red, purple, and other colours, with wide sleeves and loose cloth, draped in graceful folds on one side, were worn by the courtiers.[26] The robe of honour donned by the Persian kings and courtiers on state occasions retains, as we shall have occasion to see, its Median name among the Persians throughout their history. A tiara to cover

[16] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 4. 7, 15.
[17] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 4, 5, 11.
[18] Herod 1. 103.
[19] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 4. 4.
[20] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 14, 15; 6. 10.
[21] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 3.
[22] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 2. 424.
[23] Herod. 7. 210; 8. 113; 9. 31.
[24] Herod. 7. 62.
[25] Herod. 1. 135; Strabo 11, 13. 9.
[26] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 3.

the head, tunic, drawers, and shoes constituted the dress of men.[27] Rich people wore golden necklaces, bracelets, and collars, and adorned their horses with golden girdles.[28]

**Food and drink.** The Medes were especially noted for their lavishness at the banquet table, which, on great occasions, were piled with many varieties of meat and game dishes, vegetables and sauces.[29] Wine was freely used at banquets,[30] which were accompanied by the music of flutes.[31]

**Luxury.** With the establishment of power, and the growth of wealth, the virile qualities that had enabled the Medes to carve out their empire began to deteriorate before the vices of unbridled luxury. The king frequented the society of his concubines and dancing girls, while the cup-bearers kept his cup filled with wine. The royal example was followed by the nobles and chiefs, who forgot the hardy habits of their forefathers in their love for a life of ease and comfort, and their growing fondness for rich apparel and choice diet. They learned, also, to decorate their persons and beautify their faces by means of applying antimony to the lower eye-lids, and colours to their faces, and by wearing false hair.[32]

**Art and architecture.** Ecbatana, the capital city, was built with great skill, and contained the royal palace and other buildings of great beauty. The royal edifice is said to have occupied an area of about two thirds of a mile. The material mostly used in the structure was of cedar and cypress wood. The timber pillars and beams, as also the ceilings, were covered with gold and silver plates, and the roof was formed of silver tiles. The wooden walls of the inner apartments, ornamented with coatings of precious metals, seem to have been the particular features of the edifices.[33] The city, according to Herodotus, was surrounded by seven concentric walls, rising one above the other by means of the battlements, which were all painted in different colours. The palace and the royal treasury were situated within the seventh circle, whose walls were crowned with battlements

[27] Herod. 3. 12; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 2; *Anab.* 1. 5. 8.
[28] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 2, 3; 2. 4, 6.
[29] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 4.
[30] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 8, 10.
[31] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 5. 7.
[32] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 2.
[33] See Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 2. 265.

decorated with silver and gold.[34] The houses of the people were built outside the circuit of the walls.[35] Nothing, however, of the architectural monuments of the period, has survived the ravages of time, with the possible exception of a stone lion, sculptured in a sitting posture and measuring about twelve feet from head to tail, which now lies in a mutilated condition at Hamadan.[36]

[34] Herod. I. 98.
[35] Herod. I. 99.
[36] See Jackson, *Persia Past and Present,* pp. 159-161, New York, 1906.

# THE ACHAEMENIAN PERIOD

From 558 B.C. to 330 B.C.

## CHAPTER XXX

## THE ACHAEMENIANS

**The Persians of Pars.** Of the various groups of the Aryan people who planted their settlements in the western part of Iran, the people who had descended to the extreme south, and rose to an unequalled greatness, were the Persians. In the ninth century B.C., the Assyrian king Shalmaneser II is reported to have undertaken a campaign against the people of Parsua, a tract of territory in the Zagros. As it is probable, the people of this region were identical with the Persians of the further east of the later period, and the record of their name in the Assyrian inscriptions could thus be regarded as the earliest mention of their race. It was in the region corresponding to modern Farsistan, that the Persians had established themselves, when they began to make their history. The tract of land which they occupied was called Pars, known as Perse, in its Greek form, and from which is derived the name Persia. In its own country, the province came to be known as Fars or Farsistan from the time of the Arab conquest, and the native tongue of the whole of Persia is called up to this day, Farsi. Unlike the Zoroastrians still living in Persia, who are called Iranis, or inhabitants of Iran, their co-religionists in India continue to be called Parsis, after their illustrious ancestors of Pars.

Herodotus informs us that the early Persians were divided into several tribes,[1] the most noted of these being, the Pasargadae. The ruling house of the Persians, which built the mightiest and most extensive power known to the ancient world, is called after the name of Hakhamanish, the head of the royal family, more familiarly known in its Greek form, Achaemenes. The Persians lived as a tributary subject people under the Medes. They were led by Cyrus, an intrepid Persian of unbounded energy and initiative, into revolt against the Median

[1] Herod. I. 125.

rule. The decaying empire fell before the hardy Persians, and the royal sceptre passed into their hands. This substitution of the Persian in place of the Median power, meant nothing more than a mere dynastic change, which replaced one Aryan ruling house by another of the same race. The racial affinity of the Medes with the Persians was believed to be so complete, that the Biblical and classical literature usually employ their names as alternative terms. The united Medo-Persian Empire founded by Cyrus was thus formed of the two component parts of the Aryan people, that had settled in Western Iran, and were soon welded into one common nation. With their superior intelligence, the Magi, the priests of the Medes, soon imposed their culture upon the Persians, and became their priests, instructors, and diviners. The new empire had, during its life of about two centuries and a quarter, its seat of power in Pars, but exercised its sovereign sway over a kingdom whose boundaries embraced the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa

**Diverse civilizations met in Achaemenian Persia.** The civilization witnessed under the Achaemenians was mostly derivative. The Aryan Medes and Persians had founded their empires on the ruins of the Semitic Babylonian and Assyrian kingdoms. Persian civilization remained predominantly Aryan, yet Semitic influence had its part in shaping their culture. This is more particularly evident, as we shall see later, in the sphere of art and architecture. The cuneiform script in which the Achaemenian kings record their achievements on rocks, was, as we shall also see, borrrowed from the conquered Semitic peoples. Even the Aramaic script, in which the sacred Avestan texts have reached us, is, as already pointed out, of Semitic origin. The Egyptian people, who built their great civilization on the Nile, were brought under the Persian rule, and the victors willingly permitted themselves to be inspired by the vanquished in the creation of their architectural monuments. Achaemenian Persia was again in constant touch with Greek civilization throughout the entire period of its history. Greek physicians served at the royal court, Greek mercenaries fought under the Persian banner, and in the Persian wars against the Greeks, the two peoples met on various battlefields. East and West, thus came to close contact in Persia, and the progressive infiltration of ideas on both sides continued to the last days of the Achae-

menian dynasty. The Panjab and Sind in India, were tributaries to the Persian kings, and Achaemenian Persia influenced the institutions and architecture of the Maurya Empire of Chandragupta and Asoka.[2] Another great people living as a subject race, under Persian rule, were the Jews. It was during this period that Zoroastrian ideas infiltrated among the people, and influenced Judaism.

It is interesting to note here that the policy of the Achaemenian kings towards the religions of their subject races was of great tolerance. They built and restored the temples of the conquered peoples, and honoured their gods. The Persian king was the shepherd and anointed of Yahweh in Judea, the chosen of Marduk in Babylon, and the son of Neit in Egypt, as he was the beloved of Auramazda in his native country.[3]

**Their physique.** Herodotus says that the Persians had weak skulls, and he attributes the fact to their custom of covering their heads with turbans.[4] The Persian type of features which we meet in the sculptures on the walls and staircases of their palaces, shows a fine symmetry of features, a handsome and martial physiognomy, a virile expression of countenance, and straight or aquiline noses. The rigours of climate had made them vigorous, agile, valorous, and brave.[5]

**Their racial characteristics.** The Achaemenians enjoyed the stimulus of contact with six of the greatest civilizations of their time. If they were not able, on their part, to contribute much for the permanent good of mankind, it was because a considerable portion of their brief history was occupied by warfare in the East and the West. Skilled artisans brought in large numbers, as captives of war, worked for their victors. Ready made wares poured in from various dependencies, and the constant inflow of the riches of distant lands bred in the people the habit of looking to others for the supply of necessaries, thus discouraging the exercise of their native talents. Herodotus states that he knew of no nation, so eager as the Persians to ape the customs and manners of foreign peoples.[6] Surrounded, as they were, by

[2] Smith, *The Early History of India*, pp. 145, 165, 238, Oxford, 1914; cf. Spooner, *The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History*, in JRAS., 1915. pp. 63-89, 405-455.
[3] See my *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 73.
[4] Herod. 3. 12.
[5] Herod. 7. 211; 9. 62.
[6] Herod. 1. 135.

almost all great peoples of the ancient world, they profited by the multifarious types of culture. The receptive habit, thus growing apace, developed in the people, the spirit of adaptability. The chief part that the Achaemenians played in the spread of civilization, was that they became a great civilizing influence among the numerous backward races and peoples, with whom their vast conquests brought them in contact, and to whom they gave the priceless cultural treasure, which they themselves had assimilated. This made them the transmitters of ideas, a doubtful honour, however, which did not sharpen their ability to invent and originate.

Theirs was a masculine religion, which emphasized the manly and heroic life. They were gay and vivacious, full of life and cheerfulness, amiable and hospitable, lively and industrious, boisterous and obtrusive by nature. They were energetic, but, theirs was the energy, which exploded with sudden outbursts, and did not endure. They were noted for their probity. Truth was a virtue, most highly valued among them. The most important item in the education of the youths, was to teach them to speak the truth.[7] Lying was, according to them, a most disgraceful act.[8] The Persians' love of truth was a favourite theme with the Greeks. The Persians in their early days were poor, yet they were proud.[9] They were great sticklers for etiquette. The Persians are known for their deep loyalty to their kings. The idea that loyalty was a great virtue was indelibly imprinted on the minds of the people, and history furnishes many instances, in which men were ready to undergo any hardship, or even to lay down their lives for their king.[10] It was Auramazda who gave the throne to the Persian king, and it was by the grace of Auramazda that the king ruled over his subjects. Therefore, the king was Auramazda's chosen vicegerent upon earth, to whose sacred person were due unswerving loyalty, devoted duty, and the complete submission of his subjects. Such loyalty of the people for their king, as it seems to us, generally tended to exercise a degrading influence on the morality of both the king and the people. The abject submission of the ruled, made the ruler an irresponsible, arrogant, and capricious autocrat, and made the people servile and cringing. It created a class of sycophants, who were

[7] Herod. 1. 136.
[8] Herod. 1. 138.
[9] Herod. 1. 89.
[10] Herod. 8. 118.

ever ready to cajole their king in face of his most wanton acts.[11] A subject under such circumstances cannot raise his eyes, even when wronged, and demand justice, he dare not throw his profane glance on the august person, but on bended knees he can crave for mercy. He dare make no demand for any human rights of his: he can only beg for royal boons. The subjects do not struggle to make themselves a free people, they pray that they may ever be a well-governed people. This Persian ideal of political life was in fundamental contrast to that of their Greek contemporaries. In Persia, the Kingdom of Auramazda was the cherished goal, whereas in Greece, the people aspired to form a political state. The will of Auramazda was the supreme law in Persia and the king executed this law as the representative of the divine lawgiver upon earth. The Greeks, on the other hand, made the will of the people the law of their country, and looked to their chief magistrate, as their chosen agent, to work that law on their behalf. Long and close contact with these pioneers of democratic form of human government failed to influence the political life of the Persians.[12] The Persians were impulsive and liable to be moved by sudden gusts of passion. With childlike openness they yielded to their emotions in joy or sorrow and could not compose themselves to mental calm.[13] The Persians of the early days were educated in simple habits of life, but with the easy inflow of riches from conquered countries, an aptitude for enjoyment and luxury grew apace among them. An unrestricted indulgence of pleasure corrupted their morals. The martial spirit of the warriors was enervated and, instead of the disciplined, compact, well-organized armies of Darius the Great, which had carried the Parsi banner into the remotest lands, they could muster only armed mobs. Thus, when East and West tried conclusions at Arbela, the mighty Persian Empire fell a prey at the hands of Alexander the Great.

[11] Herod. 3, 35; cf. Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 171, 172.
[12] Cf. Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 1. 185.
[13] Herod. 8. 99.

# CHAPTER XXXI

## LITERATURE

**The Achaemenians were not engrossed with intellectual pursuits.** They produced nothing in the domain of literature during the two hundred years, in which they dominated Asia. The Greek writers, from the time of Herodotus downward, who have written on the political, administrative, and military affairs of the Persians, their religious beliefs, and social customs and manners, having nothing to say regarding their literary achievements. The Biblical account of Esther mentions the existence of a compilation called the Book of Chronicles, in which, it is said, the chief state ordinances and edicts, events of note, and the memorable achievements of kings and heroes were recorded.[1] These annals, we are further informed, were often read out to the king.[2] No attempt was evidently made to give the compilation a literary form, the main idea being the making of a collection of useful state occurrences for royal information. Even this collection has totally perished, probably in the conflagration at Persepolis, thus extinguishing the written record along with the extinction of the empire.

Though the parchment has not helped to perpetuate the glory of the Persians of this period, the story of Cyrus and Darius and their glorious successors, written on solid stone, has survived the ravages of time. The trilingual inscriptions on rocks and mountains, record the achievements of the kings, and as their main purpose is to record in as brief a space as possible, the salient features of the work of the kings, they cannot be expected to embody any great literary merit. Yet the inscriptions present several specimens of composition in which historical events are recorded in terse, emphatic, and dignified language. Several notable specimens are given in the following pages.

[1] Esther, 2. 23; 10. 2. [2] Esther, 6. 1.

King Darius opens his inscription by tracing his claim to the throne of Persia:

'I am Darius, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of Persia, the King of the countries, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenian.

'Thus says Darius the King: My father is Hystaspes, the father of Hystaspes was Arsames, the father of Arsames was Ariyaramnes, the father of Ariyaramnes was (Teispes), the father of Teispes was Achaemenes.

'Thus says Darius the King: For that reason are we called Achaemenians, from ancient times are we descended, from ancient times has our family been kings.

'Thus says Darius the King. Eight of my family were kings before me, I am the ninth, for long have we been kings.'

Bh. 1. 1-10.

The King proclaims his Aryan lineage:

'I am Darius, the Great King, King of Kings, King of the countries of all races, King of this far reaching earth, son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenian, a Persian, the son of a Persian, an Aryan, of Aryan lineage.'

Dar. NRa. 2

The King enumerates the tributary countries which owe him allegiance:

'Thus says Darius the King: These are the countries which came unto me, by the grace of Auramazda I became king of them: Persia, Susiana, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, the [lands] on the sea, Sparda, Ionia, (Media), Armenia, Cappadocia, Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Chorasmia, Bactria, Soghdiana, Gandara, Scythia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, and Maka; twenty three countries in all.

'Thus says Darius the King: These are the countries which came unto me, by the grace of Auramazda they became subject unto me, they brought tribute unto me, whatsoever commands I gave them by night or by day, these they performed.'

Bh. 1. 12-20

Darius points to the sculptured figures that bear his throne, to convince the world of his subjugation of many races and people:

'Thus says Darius the King: Auramazda saw this world in confusion and gave it to me. He made me its king, I am king. By the grace of Auramazda, I established it in its place. What I ordered them, this they did, as it was my will. If thou thinkest: "not vast is the country which King Darius holds," then look in that picture at those who carry my throne, there thou wilt witness them. Then will it be known unto thee that the spear of a Persian man has forced its way afar, then will it be known unto thee that far from Persia has a Persian man fought his battles.'

Dar. NRa. 4

Darius seeks to convince the readers of the authenticity of his inscriptions:

'Thus says Darius the King: That which I have done I have always done by the grace of Auramazda. Thou who shalt hereafter read this inscription, let that which is done by me appear true unto thee; regard it not to be a lie.

'Thus says Darius the King: Let Auramazda be witness that it is true and not false, all this have I done.

'Thus says Darius the King: By the grace of Auramazda there is much more, done by me, which is not written in this inscription; for this reason it is not written, lest he who shall hereafter read this inscription, to him that which has been done by me should seem exaggerated, it may not appear true to him, but may seem to be false.'

Bh. 4. 40-50

Darius commemorates his work of digging the Suez Canal by the following inscription:

'Thus says Darius the King I am a Persian; from Persia I conquered Egypt. I commanded this canal to be dug from a river named Nile, which flows in Egypt to the sea which goes abroad from Persia. Then was this canal dug as I commanded, and ships plied from Egypt by this canal to Persia, as it was my will.'

Dar. Sz. c. 3

The Great King's benedictions on those who would in future publish his inscriptions, and his imprecations on those who would conceal them:

'Thus says Darius the King: If thou shalt not conceal this edict, but shalt make it known to the world, then may Auramazda be a friend unto thee, may thy family be large, and mayest thou live long.

'Thus says Darius the King: If thou shalt conceal this edict and shalt not make it known to the world, then may Auramazda smite thee, and may thy family perish.'

Bh. 4. 53-59

Darius devoutly ascribes all his achievements to the divine help he received:

'Thus says Darius the King: That which I have done, I have done with the grace of Auramazda. Auramazda brought me help, and the other gods that there are.

'Thus says Darius the King: For this reason Auramazda brought me help, and the other gods that there are, because I was not wicked, nor a liar, nor a tyrant, neither I nor my family.'

Bh. 4. 59-64

Darius exhorts his descendants to wage a relentless war against falsehood:

'Thus says Darius the King: Thou who mayest be king hereafter, be well on thy guard against the Lie. The man who is a liar, him punish with good punishment, if thou thinkest "my country may be secure."'

Bh. 4. 36-40

Admonitions of the Great King:

'O man, let not the commandment of Auramazda seem to thee to be disagreeable. Forsake not the Path of Truth, and sin not.'

Dar. NRa. 6

The tomb of Cyrus had, according to Aristobulus and Onesicritus, who visited the royal grave, the following inscriptions which, however, have perished now.[3]

'O man, I am Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, who founded the Persian Empire and was King of Asia. Grudge me not therefore this monument.'

Another inscription had the simple statement.

'I, Cyrus, King of Kings, lie here.'

[3] See Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 289, New York, 1906.

## CHAPTER XXXII

## SOCIETY

**Social divisions.** Herodotus states that the Pasargadae was the noblest of the various tribes that formed the Persian race, and adds that the ruling house of the Achaemenians came from one of its clans.[1] The other Persian tribes are divided by Herodotus among agriculturists and nomads.[2] The descendants of the six chief families, whose founders had played conspicuous parts in establishing the claim of the royal family to the throne, formed the nobility of the land, occupied the highest civil, military, and naval positions, and enjoyed exceptional privileges in the country.[3]

With very brief respites, the Persians were embroiled in protracted warfare, hence the largest proportion of the male population, as we shall see in the proper place, embraced the profession of arms.

The Magi, says Strabo, adhered to a sedate mode of life.[4] They ministered to the spiritual needs of the people. No sacrifice was lawful, unless it was consecrated and offered by them.[5] They guarded the royal tombs,[6] interpreted dreams,[7] read the meaning of the portents,[8] instructed the princes,[9] and invested the king with the royal robe.[10]

Probably there was no large commercial or artisan class. The Persians looked to commerce with aversion, and regarded market-places as the breeding grounds of falsehood and deceit.[11]

[1] Herod. 1. 125; cf. Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 5; Strabo 15. 3. 1.
[2] Herod. 1. 125.
[3] Herod. 3. 83, 84.
[4] Strabo 15. 3. 1.
[5] Herod. 1. 132.
[6] Strabo 15. 3. 7.
[7] Herod. 7. 12, 14, 19; Strabo 15. 3. 16.
[8] Herod. 7. 37.
[9] Rapp, *The Religion and Customs of the Persians and other Iranians*, tr. Cama, p. 227.
[10] Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 3. 454.
[11] Herod. 1. 153; 2. 167.

According to Strabo, the wealthy classes took pride in affirming that they did not contaminate their fingers with buying or selling.[12]

**The family.** Descent was reckoned in the male line, and the father was the head of the family. A large family, with numerous offspring, is the blessing that Darius invokes upon those, who would protect the royal sculptures against ruin.[13] In the general desire for children, the one wish of the husbands evidently was, that their wives would bear them sons. To be the father of many sons was regarded as a great manly excellence, and as the increase in the number of male children added to the strength of the country, the king annually sent rich gifts to him who showed the largest number.[14]

The mother gave her own breast to the young mouth and brought up the infant with tender affection. The child remained under the loving care of the mother, and the other female members of the family, for five years, after which it was thought fit to receive instruction.[15] As the highest ambition of parents was to see their sons grow to be brave soldiers and useful countrymen, strict discipline was enforced upon them, both by the father and the mother at home. The son had to stand up, whenever his mother entered, and could not sit, until she ordered him to do so, and the father was still more exacting in his demands for good discipline.[16] The people had so high an opinion of their sons brought up in this manner, that whenever a case of parricide occurred, it was generally believed that such an unworthy son could not have been born and bred in the sacredness of the nuptial bond.[17]

**The position of women.** Social usages were more partial and favourable to man than to woman. It is clear that women did not hold equality with men, and occupied, perhaps, a position inferior to that of their sisters of Eastern Iran, as we have seen them pictured in the Avestan texts. Women of the poorer classes enjoyed greater freedom of movement, than those of the upper classes, who had to remain in seclusion. They were not permitted to mix with male members of society. When they went out, they sat in litters, which were curtained. We find no

[12] Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[13] Bh. 4. 56.
[14] Herod. 1. 136; Strabo 15. 3. 17.
[15] Herod. 1. 136.
[16] Rapp. *op. cit.* pp. 305, 306.
[17] Herod. 1. 138.

female figures carved on the walls of the palaces, nor do we read references in the inscriptions to women of royal families. Herodotus, however, informs us that Darius had ordered a statue of Artystone, the favourite among his wives, to be wrought in gold.[18] It was considered a very great insult to compare a man to a woman, or to call him worse than a woman.[19]

The existence of concubinage among rulers, and members of upper classes, lead us to think that the ideal of womanhood prevailing among the people could not have been very high. The passion for pleasure had so far enslaved the kings and their generals, especially in the later period, that they did not scruple to take their concubines with numerous attendants to the battle-field, when they went to fight their country's battles.[20]

Accustomed to have all their work done by slaves and eunuchs, who filled the households of rich families, the women of upper classes thought it lowering to their dignity to work with their hands. They considered such work as the heritage of the poor alone,[21] and lived an idle life. Occasionally, they indulged themselves in more manly games, such as the skillful use of the bow and the javelin.[22]

**Marriage.** When a youth had completed his education, which was usually at an age not earlier than twenty, he entered into matrimony with the approval of his parents.[23] Marriages were not contracted in childhood, even among poor people, who did not send their sons to school. The age of marriage probably coincided with the years, when boys and girls reached puberty. There seem to have been no restrictions on the number of wives a man might marry.[24] The kings, as we shall see later, married several wives and maintained concubines,[25] and the nobles, chiefs, and the wealthy, followed the royal example.[26] As indulgence in several wives depended mainly on the length of a man's purse, the poor naturally contented themselves with monogamy.

According to Strabo, marriages were solemnized by a cere-

[18] Herod. 7. 69.
[19] Herod. 7. 11; 8. 88; 9. 20, 107.
[20] Herod. 7. 83, 187; 9. 76, 81.
[21] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 243.
[22] Ctesias, *Persica*, 54.
[23] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 5. 20.
[24] Herod. 1. 135.
[25] Herod. 3. 68, 88. 130; 7. 3, 69, 224; Strabo 15. 3. 17; Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 477.
[26] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 238.

mony, and were usually held at the beginning of the vernal equinox. The bridegroom, he adds, ate nothing on the wedding day, but some fruit or the marrow of a camel, before entering the bride's chamber.[27] When the guests had partaken of wine, the bride entered the room, and the groom who was seated in a place of honour, welcomed her by giving her his right hand and a kiss.[28]

**Social customs.** The Persians had generally adopted the customs of the Medes. Good manners in their social intercourse were rigorously observed among the people, and violations were regarded as evidences of ill-breeding, to be strongly dealt with. Persons of privileged families, courtiers, governors, commanders of the army, and all those occupying high positions in the state or exalted rank in society, received humble obeisance or prostration from their inferiors. When men of equal rank met on the street, they embraced,[29] and kissed each other on the lips, but to persons of inferior position, the practice was to offer the cheek, and to bend one's body to a person of still lower rank [30]

Strewing the streets with myrtle boughs, burning incense, feasting, and merry making were familiar ways of expressing national joy, when the people heard of the victory of their king over his enemies; similarly unrestrained was the expression of grief shown by rending the garments and weeping aloud, when the news of defeat reached them.[31]

Mourning for the death of a king was expressed by the rending of one's garment and lamentation,[32] or for the fall of their commander on the battlefield, by the shaving of their heads by the soldiers, and by cutting the manes of the horses and sumpter beasts.[33] It was considered unbecoming to eat or drink anything in the streets,[34] as also to spit, blow the nose, or to be seen going aside to make water.[35] The seat of honour was always regarded as being on the right hand,[36] giving each other

[27] Strabo 15. 3. 17.
[28] Arrian, *Anabasis* 7. 4. 7, as quoted by Gray, in *Marriage (Iranian)*, ERE. 8. 459.
[29] Xen. *Cyrop.* 2. 1. 1.
[30] Herod. 1. 134; Xen *Cyrop.* 1. 4. 27, 28; 5. 5. 6; cf. Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[31] Herod. 8. 99.
[32] Herod. 3. 66; 8. 99.
[33] Herod. 9. 24.
[34] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 8. 11.
[35] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 16; 8. 1. 42; 8. 8. 8.
[36] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 10.

their right hand concluded an agreement between two persons,[37] and the holding up right hands on the part of messengers from the enemy on the battlefield, signified their peaceful intentions.[38] Men of rank did not like to be seen travelling on foot.[39]

From the sculptured figures it may be seen that men wore long beards and kept the hair hanging in tresses, or arranged in curls. In the later period of growing luxury, false hair came to be worn to beautify one's appearance.[40] Xenophon attests the use of cosmetics over the face and the colouring of the eyelids among the rich people.[41] Birthday anniversaries were celebrated amid great rejoicings by rich and poor alike. On such occasions rich families roasted an ox, a horse, or a camel whole in ovens, and served the viands to their guests, whereas the poor contented themselves with smaller cattle.[42]

**Slaves and eunuchs.** Both the slaves and eunuchs were employed in large numbers by the rich people for domestic services. These menials were always drawn from non-Persian tribes, or from the conquered races.[43] People from the subdued countries were often brought to Persia as slaves.[44] The servile population was assigned to special villages,[45] or was distributed in various parts of the country. Besides a numerous body of slaves serving in the royal household, the slaves abounded in the families of the governors, grandees, and rich people.[46]

Eunuchs were chiefly employed in the harems of the king,[47] and his satraps.[48] When the Persian armies of Darius conquered the Ionian towns that had revolted, they turned their best youths into eunuchs.[49] Among the many articles of tribute that the king received from his subject races, may be mentioned 500 boy eunuchs annually from Babylonia.[50] Besides being employed in the harem, the eunuchs served the king as doorkeepers, at-

[37] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 6. 10; 8. 4. 25, 26.
[38] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 2. 17-19; 6. 3. 13, 17.
[39] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 3. 23; 8. 8. 19.
[40] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 2.
[41] For ref. see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3, 243.
[42] Herod. 1. 133.
[43] Herod. 1. 161.
[44] Herod. 4. 202; 7. 181.
[45] Herod. 4. 204.
[46] Herod. 1. 137; 7. 107.
[47] Herod. 3. 77, 130.
[48] Herod. 4. 43.
[49] Herod. 6. 9, 32.
[50] Herod. 3. 92.

tendants, and in various other capacities.[51] During the time of war, they accompanied the wives and concubines of their masters on the field.[52] Under weak kings, the eunuchs often rose to great power, and became a source of danger to the empire.[53]

[51] Herod. 3. 77, 130; Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 5. 65.
[52] Herod 7. 187; 8. 104, 105; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2. 489.
[53] *See Rawlinson, op. cit.* 3. 483.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## EDUCATION

**Aim of education.** The Avestan people who inhabited Eastern Iran were primarily concerned with imparting religious instructions to their youths. Their kin of Western Iran, being a military people, concerned themselves primarily with the physical training of their sons and strove to make them hardy warriors. With this object in view, boys were brought up under the stern discipline of their tutors, who tried to inure the bodies of youths with rigorous exercises, for unremitting toil, and for the arduous performance of their duty. To act promptly and decisively in face of danger, to be of agile body, to endure fatigue and hardship, to be temperate and self-denying, and to be courageous and regardless of life on the battlefield, were the qualifications which were highly valued in the boys.

Besides this, the preceptors of the youths of the country, were expected to provide educated men who could govern the Persian dependencies, and administer justice in the law courts. The governors, or satraps, as they were called, were generally selected from the military ranks. Consequently, not only had the instructors to train youths to be undaunted warriors, but also to make them soldiers of great administrative ability. Similarly, the judges had to be well versed in the laws and customs of the country, and it was the duty of the teachers to prepare them for such legal work. The gates of the house of instruction were open to all classes of Persians, and all those who could afford to send their sons to schools were at liberty to do so.[1]

In absence of any information, we are not in a position to form any idea about the education imparted to the girls of the country.

**Period of education.** In their early childhood, male children were brought up under the care of their women guardians. Herodotus and Strabo inform us that boys were thus cared for until the age of five, after which they were given over in charge

[1] Xen. *Cyrop.* I. 2. 15.

of their male tutors.[2] According to other sources, the education of boys began at the age of seven.[3] The entire course of instruction covered a considerable period. At sixteen or seventeen years of age, the boys finished their general education,[4] but in many cases, courses of higher studies extended to the twentieth,[5] or even to the twenty-fourth year.[6]

**The place of instructions.** In the capital city, the sons of the nobles and rich persons met in the square adjoining the royal palace, or in the buildings surrounding the legal courts.[7] In provincial towns, the place of educating youths was at the gates of the residence of the governor.[8] In other towns, the schools met probably in the precincts of some public buildings. The houses of instruction, however, were never selected in the vicinity of the market-place. This precaution was taken with the object of saving boys from the pernicious effect of the atmosphere of lying, swearing, and cheating which was believed to hang about the bazars.[9]

**Moral and intellectual education.** The Persians therefore laid great emphasis on the moral instruction of their youths who would in later life be called upon to fill positions of high responsibility in the state. We have noticed the vigour with which Darius stigmatized falsehood as a grievous sin against God, and a great crime against society. It is no exaggeration, therefore, as we are informed by Herodotus, that the very first lesson learned by Persian youths at the feet of their preceptors was the rigid adherence to truth.[10] They were instructed in the fundamentals of their religion and were acquainted with the cardinal virtues enjoined therein.[11] The teachers narrated, with or without music, the work of the celestial beings, or exploits of the ancient heroes, and achievements of the great men of their country, and exhorted them to emulate their noble examples.[12]

[2] Herod. 1. 136; cf Strabo 15. 3 17.
[3] For ref. see Gray, *Education* (*Persian*), in ERE. 5. 207.
[4] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 8.
[5] Herod. 1. 136.
[6] Strabo 15 3. 18.
[7] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 3, 4; 8. 8. 13; *Anab.* 1. 9, 3.
[8] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 6. 10.
[9] Herod. 1. 153.
[10] Herod. 1. 136.
[11] See Rapp, *The Religion and Customs of the Persians and other Iranians*, tr. Cama, pp. 292, 293.
[12] Strabo 15. 3. 18.

**Physical training.** The rugged virtues which they had brought from their mountain home had enabled the Persians to build the largest empire known to the world in early times, and these the teachers sought to instil into the youths by proper instruction. Boys were made to rise at the early dawn, at the sound of brazen instruments, and were ordered to assemble at some appointed place. They were then divided in companies of fifty under the leadership of a prince, or a governor's son, and were made to run a considerable distance.[13] Riding and dexterous handling of the horse, mounting or alighting, when at full speed, throwing the javelin and darting the arrow, swimming, hunting, pursuing thieves and robbers, farming and planting, constructing lines and nets for hunting, and various other exercises which tended to harden their sinews and made them strong and hardy, were employed in their training.[14] Besides this, they were drilled in the exercise of the breath and lungs, made to practise loud speaking, were exposed to the rigours of climate, made to go on long marches under the heat of the scorching sun, or against biting frost and cold, were made to cross rivers, keeping their armour and clothes dry, were ordered to pasture animals, and to watch all night in the open air.[15] Their daily food was bread, salt, roasted or boiled meat, and water, or was often still coarser, in order to foster in them simple habits of life.[16]

When the boys grew up to twenty years of age, they were given subordinate positions, either as foot-soldiers or mounted guards.[17]

[13] Strabo 15. 3. 18.
[14] Herod. 1. 136; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 9-11; Strabo 15. 3. 18.
[15] Strabo 15. 3. 18.
[16] Strabo 15. 3. 18; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 8.
[17] Strabo 15. 3. 18.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## KINGSHIP

**The king.** The Persian sovereign is spoken of as the Great King, the King of Persia, or the King of the countries, or the King of Kings, in the rock inscriptions. The King of Persia is usually styled by the classical writers the Great King in their accounts of the ancient Persians. The king was in reality the King of Kings, because he had subdued several kings and held them as his vassals. The ceremony of the inauguration of the kings generally took place in a temple at Pasargadae, to which ancient capital, every new monarch repaired for coronation.[1] The office of the king was hereditary and ran in the male line.[2] The eldest son of the king, by his legitimate wife, had the first claim to the throne,[3] and it was in his absence alone that a male issue of the king, by other women in the royal harem, was allowed to reign.[4] The heir to the throne was generally appointed during the lifetime of the king, for the custom of the land was that the king could not leave the seat of government, when he proceeded to war, until he had appointed a legal successor to the throne.[5]

**The power of the king.** The king was the absolute ruler of his kingdom, and his power over the people was complete. He drew his right to rule over men from Auramazda, with whose authority, he was clothed as his vicegerent upon earth, and as such, he was responsible for his actions to God alone. Darius repeatedly says in his inscriptions, that Auramazda has granted him the kingdom, and he holds the empire by his divine grace. Unfettered by any human law, the king made his own will the sole rule of his actions.[6] He legislated, made war or peace, and decreed or relaxed tribute and taxation. In their daily prayers

[1] Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 3. 454.
[2] Bh. 1. 4-10; Bh. a 2-4; Strabo 15. 3. 17.
[3] Herod. 7. 2. 3.
[4] Herod. 3. 2.
[5] Herod. 1. 208; 7. 2.
[6] Herod. 3. 31.

the people invoked the blessings upon him.[7] The king's birthday was celebrated with great festivities by his subjects throughout the empire.[8] It was the highest honour to have the opportunity for a glance of the august personage. Those who had the privilege of approaching him, had to prostrate themselves before him in profound humility,[9] until he commanded them to rise, and to stand with folded hands as long as they remained in the royal presence. The courtiers, as well as the captains of the army, were obliged to pass their hands through their robes, when they stood in the presence of the king.[10] The only person whom the king honoured as his superior, was the queen-mother, if she was living. He allowed himself to be greatly influenced by her, and sat below her at the dinner table in his palace.[11]

Though the king was thus above all human law, he felt himself bound to recognize the higher or divine law of Auramazda. However great and unequalled his status among mankind, the king was himself the minister of God upon earth to dispense his goodness to mankind, and was, therefore, in duty bound to carry out the behests of the heavenly king. We are informed that a chamberlain was ordered to approach his royal master every morning, to remind him of the duty which God had imposed upon him.[12] This anxiety to gain the goodwill of his heavenly master, and the fear of the divine wrath, had a very restraining and salutary effect upon the character of the king. Darius openly avows that Auramazda and other heavenly beings helped him, because he was not wicked, nor a liar, nor a tyrant, and because he ruled according to the law of righteousness.[13]

**The king in public life.** Whenever the king appeared before the public, or attended the court, he walked with dignified gravity of deportment, befitting his exalted position. Dressed in the richest and most imposing garments, and adorned with the most precious jewels, he advanced to his seat with majestic steps. An attendant held over his head, a shallow, tent-shaped parasol, supported on a long stick ornamented at the top. In his right

[7] Herod. 1. 132.
[8] Rapp, *The Religion and Customs of the Persian and other Iranians*, tr. Cama, p. 344.
[9] *Ib.* p. 320.
[10] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 10; *Hellenics*, 2. 1 8.
[11] Rapp, *op. cit.* p. 306.
[12] *Ib.* pp. 326, 327.
[13] Bh. 4. 62-64.

hand, the king bore the royal sceptre of gold, which was a long staff, topped with a rounded shape and pointed at the bottom. He never allowed himself to be seen on foot outside his palace grounds.[14] On important occasions, when the king marched in state, the roads were stopped to traffic, and rows of troops stood on each side of the way through which the royal pageant was to pass. A large number of guards, drawn up four deep, occupied places on either side of the royal gates. The horse, foot, and chariots, all joined the procession, and were stationed half on each side. If the occasion required that the king should offer sacrifices, the bulls and horses, with golden yokes on their necks and crowns, emerged first from the royal gates. The sacred fire, borne by men upon a large altar, was immediately followed in a chariot by the king who was attired in magnificent costume of purple. A large number of wand-bearers rode behind him with javelins in their hands. Then followed thousands of horsemen of several races, led by Persian cavalry, and the rear was closed by the chariots, ranged four abreast.[15] Usually, the king took a direct interest in the affairs of the state, and kept himself familiar with the happenings in the various satrapies, into which his vast empire was divided. He consulted his wise counsellors on private as well as public affairs. He issued orders to his governors on important matters, and heard their replies. He showed special royal favour to those of his governors who rendered meritorious services,[16] or punished those who attempted to rival him in power and otherwise disobeyed him.[17] Similarly, the king received envoys and ambassadors from distant countries, heard their messages, and, in consultation with his ministers, dictated the reply to the scribes. He heard the grievances of the people, and punished his officials, who proved dishonest in their duty.[18] He issued royal decrees, had them written in different languages spoken by the various subjects of his vast empire,[19] and dispatched heralds throughout his kingdom proclaiming his orders. When he intended to prepare for war, he sent messengers to his governors to furnish men, ships, animals, and other materials. He appointed commanders of the army, and replaced those who failed of a good record of achievements on the battlefield. As

[14] Rapp, *op. cit.* p. 341.
[15] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8 3. 9-18, 34.
[16] Herod. 5. 106.
[17] Herod. 4. 166.
[18] Herod. 5. 25; 7. 194.
[19] Esther 1. 19-22.

a rule, he himself led his army against an enemy, or watched and guided the actions of the soldiers with keen interest.

**The royal court.** The king was surrounded by several nobles and officers of graded ranks, who served as his courtiers. Besides the royal family, there were six chief families of nobles, whose representatives had special rights and privileges. These were the men who had collaborated with Darius in overthrowing the usurper Smerdis. It was agreed among them, when Darius ascended the throne, that they should have free access to the palace to communicate with the king, and that the special privileges which they enjoyed, should be allowed to their successors after them.[20] These men, who were the noblest in point of their extraction, were second in position to the king alone. They were the chief counsellors of the king, and played the most prominent part in the conduct of the affairs of the state.[21] They enjoyed the confidence of the king, and it was considered highly reprehensible for the courtiers to divulge the secrets of the king or the state.[22] Important civilian offices of the state, and commandership of the army, fell to the lot of the members of these privileged families.

Court astrologers, who were drawn from the race of the Magi, were among those that formed the royal court, and were often consulted to interpret dreams of their royal master, or to read good omens before embarking upon war.

The scribes wrote down royal edicts and put the royal seal upon them in the presence of the king.[23] They read out to the king, the documents received from the governors, or messages from foreign kings, and prepared the draft replies, as dictated by him. As already noticed, it was the custom to record state ordinances, royal edicts, the names and conspicuous services of those, whom the king honoured, and all events worthy of note, in a compilation, called, the Book of Chronicles of the kings of Persia and Media,[24] and to read the annals to the king, whenever he required.[25] The scribes accompanied the king when he went to the battlefield and did the clerical work, as at the court.[26]

The chamberlains, bodyguards, an attendant with a fly-chaser

[20] Herod. 3. 83, 84.
[21] Esther 1. 14; Ezra 7. 14; Herod. 3 84, 118.
[22] Rapp. *op. cit.* p. 349.
[23] Esther 3. 12; 8. 9.
[24] Esther 2 23; 10. 2.
[25] Esther 6. 1.
[26] Herod. 7. 100; 8. 90.

in hand, standing behind the king, and others completed the royal court.

The officers, peculiarly known as the Eyes and Ears of the king, informed the king of all important happenings behind him.[27] By awarding the services of these persons with honours and gifts, the king gathered round his person a number of men who watched with their eyes, and kept their ears attentive, in the interest of the king, and reported to him all they considered worthy his knowing.[28] Like Mithra, constantly spoken of in the Avestan texts, as possessed of a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes, the king can thus be said to have had numerous eyes and ears to guard his interests and safety.

**The king in private life.** Just as the king maintained his pomp and dignity in his movements in the public, so did he maintain great reserve in the associations of his private life. He did not allow himself to be approached by any but the greatest in the country. In his choice of mates for his daughters, he selected Persian nobles who had distinguished themselves at the court or on the battlefield.[29] His chief source of diversion, as we shall see in its place, was hunting with his courtiers. At home he played dice and similar games with his wives or near relatives, and took his daily meals with the queen-mother and his wedded wife.[30] Sometimes he admitted those in whom he confided, to dine and drink with him. Special officers attended the royal dinner-table and tasted every dish, lest it should be poisoned.[31] When a large number of guests were invited to dinner at the palace on great occasions, the king sat in an elevated place, and a thin curtain generally divided him from his guests. A royal banquet was given at the palace on the king's birthday, when the sovereign associated more freely with his chief guests at the table.[32] On this day he distributed gifts among his people.[33]

The king was lavish in the bestowal of gifts upon those who had rendered him good service.[34] At times they were asked to name the boon which they desired most, and this the king readily granted them.[35] The fortunate one whom the king delighted to honour, was awarded the royal robe and horse.[36] To show his

[27] Herod. 1. 114.
[28] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 2. 10-12.
[29] Herod. 5. 116.
[30] Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 3. 455.
[31] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 213.
[32] Herod. 9. 110.
[33] *Ib.*
[34] Herod. 7. 106, 107.
[35] Herod. 5. 11, 23.
[36] Esther 6. 6-11.

special favour to those who were devotedly attached to him, he sent dishes from the royal table. The recipient of such distinction rose in public estimation and was believed to be greatly in the confidence of the king.[37] When the king returned to his native country, he brought presents for all Persians, both men and women.[38]

The king never tasted any other water, but that which was taken for him from the river flowing by Susa. Not only did he drink this water, when he stayed at the capital, but the water, after being boiled and filled in silver flagons, was carried in large quantities wherever he travelled in time of peace, and to the battlefield, when he went to war.[39]

**The royal household.** As it was arranged among the conspirators against Smerdis, the king married from the seven privileged families. He espoused several wives,[40] and besides kept a considerable number of concubines in his harem. Of this multitude of wives and concubines, the one who found his greatest favour, was chosen as the chief queen, and was invested with large power in the house of women. She enjoyed privileges denied to others, who shared the royal affection with her. She was privileged to wear a royal crown,[41] and to preside over the royal feast which she gave to women in her palace.[42] She was provided with large income of her own,[43] and the female attendants and the concubines of the seraglio served her with humble prostration.[44] But despite this authority she wielded in the women's apartment, she was not secure against occasional royal displeasure. If the king was offended with her, he degraded her from her position, and exalted another in her place.[45] Each wife had a separate chamber allotted to her, in which she lived with her female attendants.[46]

The concubines who filled the harem in large numbers occupied separate apartments, and were placed under the close supervision of the chief of eunuchs, who was termed the keeper of women.[47] The concubines sang and danced to entertain their royal master in the palace,[48] and accompanied him under surveil-

[37] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 2. 4.
[38] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 5. 21.
[39] Herod. 1. 188.
[40] Herod. 3. 68, 88; 7. 3, 69, 224.
[41] Esther 1. 11; 2. 17.
[42] *Ib.* 1. 9.
[43] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 218.
[44] *Ib.*
[45] Esther 2. 17.
[46] Herod. 3. 68.
[47] Esther 2. 8.
[48] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 219.

lance of eunuchs to the battlefield,[49] and to the hunting ground.[50]

Eunuchs have usually been an inevitable adjunct to the inmates of the harem. They were found principally in the women's quarter of the palace, in service of the wives and concubines of the king,[51] and sometimes rose even to high positions in the state.[52]

The entire establishment was under the charge of an officer styled the master of the royal household.[53]

[49] Herod. 7. 187.
[50] Rawlinson, *op. cit* 3. 219.
[51] Herod. 3. 77, 130.
[52] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 221.
[53] *Ib.* 3. 213.

## CHAPTER XXXV

## ADMINISTRATION

**The satrapies.** The empire built by the Persians was larger than any that had existed before them in Asia, and embraced peoples of various creeds and languages as subject races. Darius successfully organized the diverse parts loosely scattered throughout the vast area by a well-ordered system of government into a consolidated homogeneous empire. For this purpose, the empire was divided, according to Herodotus, into twenty governments,[1] or, according to the inscriptions, into twenty-three.[2] Over each of these provinces, the king appointed a ruler, called a satrap, after the Greek pronunciation of the Persian word *khshatrapa* meaning, the governor of a province.[3] These satraps were usually members of the royal family,[4] or of the nobility of the land.[5] The term of office was sometimes for life,[6] but generally extended to an indefinite period, until the king recalled one for other service, or removed him for misconduct. The custom arose in the later period of allowing the sons of satraps to succeed to the offices of their fathers.[7] The central government did not interfere with the conduct of the internal affairs of the diverse subject races, but gave them the right to manage their affairs, in accordance with their own respective laws and customs. The governors ruled in the king's name, and maintained his suzerainty over them. They imposed taxes to collect the sums at which their provinces were assessed, received the tributes due to the crown, administered justice, maintained public roads and caravan routes, promoted agriculture and trade in time of peace, and supplied men and materials to the king, when he went to war. On matters of great importance, they acted only after receiving royal

[1] Herod. 3. 89.
[2] Bh. 1. 14-17.
[3] Bh. 3. 14, 56; Herod. 1. 192.
[4] Herod. 3. 70; 5. 25, 27, 30; 6. 94; 7. 7, 9. 113.
[5] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 6. 7.
[6] Herod. 3. 160.
[7] See Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 484.

approval.[8] They sent embassies in the king's name,[9] and gave timely warning to the king of the growing power of a neighbour, who threatened to become a menace to the state.[10] The king assigned them a considerable revenue, which could enable them to maintain their dignity and pomp among the subject peoples. They had large retinue and equipage,[11] secretaries, deputies,[12] and officers of various grades to carry out their commands. They lived in palatial residences, laid out with gardens and parks, had their tables full of sumptuous dishes, and their harems tenanted by numerous women, with eunuchs in attendance, and owned hosts of household slaves.

The king made it his duty to visit the various satrapies, from time to time, to ascertain in person the conditions of his subjects under the governorship of those to whom he had delegated his power. We have already noticed that special officers known as the Eyes and the Ears of the king kept him informed of the doings of the satraps, of their frequent jealousies and dissessions with their neighbours, and of their intrigues against the king. The king sent a member of his family every year with a small force on a round of inspection in the provinces, and commissioned him to bring to his notice whatever signs of maladministration, he might have detected in any province.[13] By way of further precautions against disloyalty on the part of any satrap, the office of civil administration only was vested in the satrap. An officer, quite independent of the satrap, and directly responsible to the king, welded military authority over troops garrisoned in the satrapy, and a third official, equally independent of both the governor and the commander, had the charge of the secretariat, and was in constant communication with the royal capital.[14] This division of power lessened the chances of revolts from the central authority of the king, as it required faithlessness on the part of all the three officials together to successfully carry out intrigues against the king. But in times of emergency, when concerted action and prompt decision were absolutely necessary, the system caused great inconvenience, and hence, in later times, the head of the province had both the civil and military authority lodged in his hands. Loyal and faithful service of the governors

[8] Herod. 5. 31, 32.
[9] Herod. 5. 17.
[10] Herod. 5. 23.
[11] Herod. 3. 127.
[12] Herod. 3. 128.
[13] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 6. 16.
[14] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 6. 1.

always met with a generous recognition on the part of the monarch.[15] Similarly, immediate recall to the capital, rigorous punishment, or instantaneous death, awaited a false governor, who tyrannized over the people, rapaciously exacted undue amounts for his personal aggrandizement from his subjects, or otherwise abused his power.[16]

In the early days of the empire, the dependencies did not contribute fixed sums in tribute to the coffers of the crown, but brought gifts for the king, and it was Darius who first introduced the system of fixed tribues payable annually, both in money and in kind, and commensurate with the resources of each tributary province.[17] The only exception was in the case of Persia, the native place of the conquerors, which was exempt from all impositions.[18] The Persian people were, however, required to make the king a present whenever he passed through their towns. The present was a voluntary gift made by every individual according to his means. The amount which the various satrapies had to pay in money ranged between one hundred and seventy to a thousand talents of silver, and, in the case of the king's Indian satrapy, to three hundred and sixty talents of gold, equivalent to over a million sterling.[19] Altogether the tribute in money, apart from what was paid in kind, amounted to nearly four million sterling.[20] Besides the tribute paid in money, each satrapy had to contribute annually food and forage to the royal household and to the king's army, and to supply various other commodities which the several satrapies produced in their countries. The rich satrapy of Babylonia alone furnished all provision to the crown that could last for four months of a year, and the other satrapies divided between themselves the responsibility of supplying the royal demands for the remaining eight months of a year.[21] In addition to paying her due tribute, remitting the income of her fisheries, Egypt had to feed 120,000 Persian troops quartered at Memphis.[22] Among other things in kind, several thousand animals, such as horses, colts, mules, and sheep were brought every year to the capital from various provinces.[23] The Ethiopians brought two hundred logs of ebony,

[15] Herod. 7. 106, 107.
[16] Herod. 3. 128; 4. 166.
[17] Herod. 3. 89.
[18] Herod. 3. 97.
[19] Herod. 3. 90-94.
[20] Herod. 3. 95.
[21] Herod. 1. 192.
[22] Herod. 3. 91.
[23] Herod. 3. 90; Strabo 11. 13. 8; 14. 9.

twenty elephant tusks, and five slaves; the Colchians twenty boys and an equal number of girls, and the Arabs contributed a thousand talents of frankincense every year.[24] No less than five hundred boy eunuchs came annually from Babylonia, to pass their miserable lives in the Persian harems.[25]

This was what the subject races had to pay during the time of peace. They had to supply men and materials, as we shall see later, to the king when he embarked upon war.

There were probably other sources, which furnished more income to the royal treasury. Herodotus gives us an example of a great river flowing amid hills, with various openings to different lands. The Persian king, he says, blocked up the passages between the hills with dykes and flood-gates, and the water thus collected was supplied by a state officer to the people for irrigation of their fields, by opening the gates and allowing a measured quantity of water to pass at a time to each field, on payment of a fixed amount.[26] This was possibly done with the waters of all rivers and lakes of the empire. We have already seen that the income of the Egyptian fisheries went to the crown, similarly, it seems, mines, quarries, and forests brought large revenue to the state.

When a new king ascended the throne he remitted the tribute due from the provinces.[27] The pretender Smerdis, with a view to winning their good-will, proclaimed to all nations, on his usurpation of the Persian throne, that they were to pay no dues for three years.[28] In recognition of the remarkable services of a satrap, the king occasionally exempted him for life from all payments.[29]

**Coinage.** The gold and silver which poured into the royal treasury as part of the tribute, were melted and stored in ingots, and later coined into money, acording to requirements.[30] The coinage was modelled on that of Lydia, which fell before Cyrus. It was a bimetallic currency of gold and silver, and the relation between the values of the two metals was fixed. Herodotus asserts that gold was thirteen times more valuable than silver,[31] and Xenophon informs us that twenty of the Persian silver coins passed for one of gold.[32] The ratio of value of gold to silver

[24] Herod. 3. 97.
[25] Herod. 3. 92.
[26] Herod. 3. 117.
[27] Herod. 6. 59.
[28] Herod. 3. 67.
[29] Herod. 3. 160.
[30] Herod. 3. 96.
[31] Herod. 3. 95.
[32] Xen. *Anab.* 1. 7. 18.

was fixed at 13⅓ to 1. The gold coin was called *daric,* after the Greek adjective formed from Darius.[33] It was also called, 'the persian archer,' as it bore the impression of the king holding a bow in his hand. The gold daric weighed as much as 130 grains (grm. 8.42), and the silver coin generally called the *shekel* weighed up to 86 grains (grm. 5.57).[34] Darius used the purest gold[35] for his coins, which were for a considerable period, the only gold coins in use in the world at that time. It was the exclusive royal privilege to issue gold coins, but the satraps were empowered to strike silver coins in their own names, and with the impression of their heads upon them, when need demanded, especially on their military expeditions.[36] These coins were in vast circulation, and governed the trade of Asia Minor, until the fall of the Achaemenian Empire. We may derive an idea of the enormous quantity in use from Herodotus, who informs us that a wealthy Lydian placed before Xerxes nearly four millions of gold darics.[37] Alexander carried away vast hoards of this precious metal, when he conquered Persia.[38]

A considerable number of the gold darics and silver shekels have been discovered in recent years. They are generally thick, irregular, inartistic lumps of metal with impressions on both the sides. The coins have engraved on them on one side, the figure of the king with the royal crown on his head, and with spear and bow in his hands, or that of the king fighting with a lion, or standing in a chariot drawn by two horses, with the charioteer standing in front of him, and an attendant with a fly-chaser behind him; and on the reverse an oblong incuse with various designs.[39] The silver shekels that are now found in hoards, generally contain some marks stamped upon them, perhaps, by the bankers or the officials.[40] There is evidence that fractions of these gold and silver coins with the impression of the king's head were also in circulation.[41]

**Posts and couriers.** With the vast extension of the empire,

[33] See Gardner, *A History of Ancient Coinage,* p. 87, Oxford, 1918.
[34] *Ib.* p. 32.
[35] Herod. 4. 166.
[36] Gardner, *op. cit.* pp. 313-317, 333, 334.
[37] Herod. 7. 28.
[38] Diodorus 17. 66.
[39] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 343.
[40] Gardner, *op. cit.* pp. 179, 180.
[41] *Ib.* p. 89.

it was soon felt that some means of expeditious communication were essential, to keep the central government in constant touch with the various satrapies. The king frequently issued royal edicts which had to go their round of proclamation throughout the empire, he had to send commands to his governors regarding various affairs of state, and despatch orders to the commanders of his armies, garrisoned in near or distant lands, and had similarly to receive their replies, and frequent reports of his secretaries. Darius founded a system of roads for this purpose, and Herodotus describes a royal high road from Susa to Sardis which was of 450 parasangs or 13,500 furlongs in length, and had no less than 107 post-houses with convenient caravansarais, established at regular intervals, and guards posted at various places.[42] All along the route were stationed couriers and relays of horses. When a packet was received at the starting station, a courier mounted a horse, and galloped at once with his load to the next station, and passed on his charge to the other, who, in his turn, took a fresh horse and hurried to the next stage, thus riding by day and by night, in heat and cold, rain and snow, and passing the post from hand to hand at successive stages, the last courier discharged the post at its destination. Of the great speed with which the couriers dispatched their posts, it is said that nothing mortal ever travelled so fast as they, or, as declared by others, their conveyance was as swift as the flight of birds.[43]

**Law and justice.** 'The laws of the Medes and Persians do not change,' says the Bible, and a decree once established by the king remains immutable.[44] The king was the supreme lawgiver and the judge, who drew his authority from God. In important cases, the king administered justice in his own person, but for the general convenience, he delegated his legal authority to the most learned and upright men of his own choice. The person thus selected to occupy the most responsible position as a guardian of equity and justice in the empire was generally past fifty,[45] and was appointed for life, unless personal misdemeanour, in the execution of his duties, rendered him unworthy to hold the

[42] Herod. 5. 52, 53.
[43] Herod. 8. 98; Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 6. 17, 18.
[44] Esther 1. 19; Daniel 6. 15.
[45] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 13, 14.

office.[46] Capital punishment awaited a judge who allowed himself to be bribed.[47] One of the royal judges of Cambyses, who thus suffered himself to contaminate his hands with base metal, was condemned by the king to be put to death. The skin of his body was then ordered to be spread on the seat of judgment, and his son who was appointed to succeed his father as a judge, was made to sit on the legal throne cushioned with the skin of his father, as a daily warning to him of the dire consequences of selling justice for gold.[48] It appears that the past services of a man who was convicted of a crime were taken into consideration before a sentence was pronounced upon him. Punishment was meted out to him only, if, after weighing the good and bad deeds of the whole tenor of his life in the scale of justice, the latter were found to outweigh the good actions.[49]

As with other peoples of early times, the methods of punishment among the Persians were barbarous and cruel. In his rock inscriptions, Darius records how he ordered the nose, the ears, and the tongue of rebels cut off, and their eyes put out, and the victims were finally crucified.[50] Mutilation of limbs, pelting to death with stones, suffocating with ashes, burning alive, confining in a trough, flaying, and impaling were some of the forms of punishments.[51] Political prisoners were usually sent into exile.[52]

[46] Herod. 3. 31.
[47] Herod. 5. 25; 7. 194.
[48] Herod. 5. 25.
[49] Herod. 1. 137; 7. 194.
[50] Bh. 1. 81-83; 2. 70-79; 3 49-52, 83-90
[51] Strabo 15. 3. 17; for ref. see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 246, 247.
[52] Herod. 3. 93; 7. 80.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## WARFARE

**The warrior's profession.** We have already seen that the Persian male children were trained from their tender years through rigorous discipline and hard exercises to enable them to become good soldiers, when they reached manhood. Martial spirit, courage, and warlike disposition were studiously fostered in all youths. Prowess in arms was regarded as the surest proof of manly excellence,[1] and noble exploits the surest way of attaining distinction and greatness.[2] Disinclination on the part of a subject to enlist at the king's call, when he went to war was a capital crime. Darius, we are informed by Herodotus, was petitioned by a father who had three sons, to spare one from joining the expedition, with the consequence that all the three sons were put to death by the royal order, to set an example to others.[3] Another man whose four sons had gone to the battlefield, relying on the royal favour, which he himself enjoyed, asked Xerxes to allow his fifth son to remain behind in the city to manage his large estates, but found his son cut into two by the king's command, and placed on both the sides of the road, over which the army was to pass.[4] Military service was thus relentlessly enforced on all those, who could bear arms, with the exception of the priests. Such calls to arms were so frequent, and the intervals of peace of so short duration, that compulsory service must have been viewed with great bitterness by those of the king's subjects who longed for a protracted period of peace, in which to follow their avocations unmolested. It is, probably, to win over the sympathy of such classes of people that we see Smerdis promising immunity from military service for three years, when he usurped the throne.[5]

**Divine aid was always invoked before setting out on an expedition.** In his rock inscriptions, Darius repeatedly ascribes

[1] Herod. 1. 136. [2] Herod. 3. 154. [3] Herod. 4. 84. [4] Herod. 7. 38-40. [5] Herod. 3. 67.

all his victories to the help which he received from Auramazda. The Magi accompanied the armies with the sacred fire, kept it burning on the field, and offered prayers in its presence for the triumph of the Persian arms. Herodotus mentions in connection with the expedition of Xerxes, the holy chariot drawn by eight white horses, with the charioteer walking on foot behind them, holding the reins in his hands, as it was considered impious for a mortal to mount the sacred car.[6] Sacrificial offerings and libations to the heavenly beings were made by the Magi at various stages on the march, and the king and his Persian soldiers offered their prayers.[7] Before crossing the bridge that was to land the grand army of Xerxes on the land of Europe, libations were poured, after sunrise, from a golden goblet into the sea. The goblet and a short Persian sword, we are informed, were then thrown into the sea. The whole bridge was meanwhile strewed with myrtle boughs and perfumed with burning incense.[8]

Astrologers were likewise consulted to foretell the issues of warlike undertakings, to find out the propitious significance of the portents of the eclipses, that took place in the midst of warlike preparations.[9]

**Gathering the sinews of war.** When the king decided to embark upon a war, he dispatched his heralds to the governors of his satrapies and to the vassal kings and commanded them to supply him with fighting men, horses, provisions, ships, and transports.[10] Subject nations that lived by the side of rivers, which the armies of the king should happen to cross on their march, were asked to bridge them, to dig canals where necessary, or to make cables for the bridges.[11] Darius, we are informed, caused two pillars of white marble to be erected on the shores of the Bosphorus, which was bridged by his command, and ordered the names of all the nations that formed his army on his expedition against the Scythians to be inscribed on them.[12] Over sixty different races, observing diverse faiths, and speaking a number of languages furnished the land army and the fleet of Xerxes, when

[6] Herod. 7. 40.
[7] Herod. 7. 43, 53, 113, 114, 180, 191.
[8] Herod. 7. 54.
[9] Herod. 7. 12, 14, 19, 37; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2. 478.
[10] Herod. 2. 1; 3. 1, 44; 4. 83, 89; 5. 26; 6. 6, 48, 95; 7. 1, 21.
[11] Herod. 4. 83; 7. 22-25, 34.
[12] Herod. 4. 87.

he led his hosts to the West.[13] To swell their numbers, the conquering armies often forced the inhabitants of the countries which they had subdued on their march, to join their ranks.[14] When any of the troops, thus collected, were suspected of complicity with the enemy, they were at once disbanded.[15] Of all the fighting units thus gathered under the Persian flag, the Persians were, according to Herodotus, the bravest.[16] In later period, when the youth of the country became engrossed in the frivolities of a decadent society, mercenaries came to be employed in increasing numbers to fight the battles of the country.

**The army.** When the satraps and the tributary kings were asked to furnish troops, they were all ordered to bring their forces to some definite place.[17] The number that poured in at the imperial call amounted to several hundred thousand, as in the case of the famous expedition of Xerxes.[18] The method adopted of counting these vast numbers was to make a body of ten thousand stand in a circle as close to one another as possible, and then to draw a circle round them. The ten thousand men were then removed from the circle, and a circular fence was raised over it. The enclosure was then filled to its full capacity by fresh entries, and this multitude was counted as a second batch of ten thousand. The process was thus repeated several times, and the approximate figure of the total number of men was thus obtained.[19] The several races that contributed to form this army retained their national costumes, and were equipped with weapons which each tribe was accustomed to use. The troops were marshalled according to their several nations,[20] but all were commanded by Persian officers.[21] The army was divided in graded groups of ten, a hundred, and a thousand, and each of these groups was put under the command of a captain. There was a special division of ten thousand men, the best and picked Persians, who were called the Immortals. They were so designated, because it was arranged that whenever one of their

[13] Herod. 7. 62-80, 84-86, 89-95.
[14] Herod. 6. 99; 7. 108, 110, 115; 8. 66; 9. 1.
[15] Herod. 9. 99, 103, 104.
[16] Herod. 8. 113; 9. 31, 68, 71.
[17] Herod. 7. 26.
[18] Herod. 7. 60, 184-187.
[19] Herod. 7. 60.
[20] Herod. 7. 60.
[21] Herod. 7. 81.

number died, his place was at once filled up by another, so that their number should at no time be more or less than exactly ten thousand. Over the captains of the above named several groups were appointed six officers in high command, and the entire force was placed under the supreme command of the commander-in-chief, who was the king himself.[22] In absence of the king, the command was given to a Persian or a Median.[23] If the king was not satisfied with the work of a commander, he removed him and set another in his place.[24]

**On to the field.** Arrangements were made on a large scale, when the army was ready to march, and everything was so managed that the movements were marked with strict regularity and order. We have from Herodotus an interesting description of the way in which the hosts of Xerxes moved from the headquarters. The baggage-bearers and sumpter beasts carrying heavy baggage, we are informed, moved in the front, and were followed by about half the army of various nations. A considerable empty space was then left between them and the remaining part of the army. A thousand of the best Persian horsemen began the line of the second half of the troops, and were followed immediately by a thousand of the best spearmen, with their spear-heads pointing to the ground. Then came ten of the sacred horses, daintily caparisoned, followed by the holy chariot, drawn by eight milk-white steeds. The king now rode in a chariot, with the charioteer standing by his side. He occasionally alighted from his chariot and travelled in a litter. He was followed by a thousand brave Persian spearmen, with a thousand picked Persian horsemen behind them. Then came the best ten thousand, the Immortals, on foot. These carried spears ornamented with golden or silver pomegranates. They were followed by the best ten thousand horsemen. An empty space divided these and the remaining troops which followed in a long drawn line.[25] The camel corps was particularly kept last of all, as it was believed that the camels frightened the horses.[26]

In addition to the troops and the camp-bearers, heralds, scouts, scribes, and numerous other men attached to the army for vari-

[22] Herod. 7. 81-83; cf. Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 1. 14.
[23] Herod. 5. 2, 25.
[24] Herod. 6. 94.
[25] Herod. 7. 40, 41.
[26] Herod. 1. 80; 7. 87; Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 1. 27, 48.

ous services, there was the royal household,[27] concubines of the king and of the Persian commanders, travelling in litters, eunuchs, and attendants, that added to the motley throng.[28]

Besides taking large quantities of provisions and food along with the army, elaborate precautions were taken to lay up vast stores of provisions for the army, horses and beasts of burden, at various convenient places, through which the army was to pass.[29] Similarly, ships carried vast stores and steered their way in such a manner as to be close to the land forces.[30] By way of further precautions, the king sent heralds to all places through which his troops were to pass, to be prepared to feast him and his army. This royal behest was carried out at an enormous cost to the people of those places.[31] The countries that were conquered supplied corn.[32] In spite of all such arrangements, when provisions failed in the midst of fighting operations, cavalry horses and sumpter beasts were slaughtered to feed the troops.[33]

**Arms and armour.** The foot soldiers and horsemen were armed alike, with the difference that the latter usually wore helmets of brass or steel.[34] Among the weapons used for offensive purposes, may be mentioned, first, the bow which was of uncommon size, and the arrows of reed. The bow which had both its extremities ending in an outward curve, was carried on the left shoulder, with the arm passed through it or left hanging at the left side, and the arrows were carried in quivers hanging at the back.[35] A sword resembling a dagger lay suspended from the girdle in a sheath along the right thigh.[36] A short spear made of cornel-wood,[37] a spear with a golden and silver pome granate or apple at its lower end,[38] or a long spear, such as Darius III used against the Macedonians,[39] was another weapon

[27] Herod. 8. 103, 104, 107; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2. 480.
[28] Herod. 7. 83, 187; 8. 104, 105; 9. 76, 81; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2. 489.
[29] Herod. 7. 25.
[30] Herod. 4. 97; 6. 44; 7. 186, 191.
[31] Herod. 7. 32, 118, 119.
[32] Herod. 7. 50.
[33] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 503
[34] Herod. 7. 84.
[35] Herod. 1. 214; 5. 49; 7. 61, 218; Xen. *Anab.* 3. 4 17.
[36] Herod. 7. 54, 61; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1 2 13; 2. 1. 9, 16; 7. 1. 2.
[37] Herod. 7. 211; Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 1. 2.
[38] Herod. 7. 41.
[39] Diordorus 47. 53. 1.

of importance. A formidable weapon used chiefly by horsemen was the javelin. Two were always carried by each man, the one to fling and the other to stab.[40] The battle-axe, bill, spiked ball, and sling were other familiar weapons of the Persians.[41]

The foot-soldiers did not wear helmets like the horsemen, but ordinary tiaras.[42] The tunics with which they covered their bodies had fixed upon them iron scales, like those of a fish.[43] They wore corselets over the breast,[44] or breast-plates composed of iron scales,[45] or even of gold scales in the case of those in high command.[46] The soldiers bore wicker shields,[47] which were held in the left hands.[48] The shields were large enough to cover the warrior from head to foot, and when a number were set side by side, with overlapping edges, an affective breastwork or rampart was formed, from behind which the archers shot their arrows.[49] The horses were protected with brazen forehead pieces, breastplates, and shoulder and thigh pieces.[50]

**The war chariots.** When the king went to the field, he drove in a chariot, accompanied by a charioteer, and from it issued his commands to the officers and troops.[51] Chariots were also formidable instruments on the battlefield, large numbers of them being often used;[52] the wheels having iron scythes fixed to them on each side, enabled the infliction of considerable damage to the enemy forces, when driven through their lines.[53] Their long axletrees gave such a breadth that they could not be easily overturned.[54] Chariots were drawn by either two or four horses.[55] There was a door at the rear, which was closed, when the driver and the combatant had entered.[56] The charioteer was

[40] Herod. 9. 49; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 9; *Anab.* 1. 8. 3.
[41] Strabo 15. 3. 19; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 9; 7. 4. 11, 14, 15; 8. 8. 23; *Anab.* 3. 3. 6; 4. 16.
[42] Herod. 7. 61; Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[43] Herod. 7. 61.
[44] Herod. 1. 135; Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 13; 2. 1. 9. 16; 6. 4. 1.
[45] Herod. 7. 61; 8. 113; Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 1. 2; Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[46] Herod. 9. 22.
[47] Herod. 7. 61; 9. 61-63; Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 8. 23; *Anab.* 1. 8. 9; Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[48] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 13; 2. 1. 9, 16.
[49] Herod. 9. 61, 99, 102.
[50] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 4. 1; 7. 1. 2; 8. 8. 22.
[51] Herod. 7. 40, 100; Xen. *Anab.* 1. 2. 16; 1. 8. 3.
[52] Cf. Herod. 7. 86; see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3, 179, n. 10.
[53] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 1. 30; 6. 2. 7, 8; 7. 1. 31, 47; 8. 8. 24; *Anab.* 1. 8. 10.
[54] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 1. 29.
[55] For ref. see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 181, n. 9, 10.
[56] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 4. 10.

clothed in complete armour, which left only his eyes uncovered.[57]

**The camp.** Before invading the country of an enemy, it was usually the custom to send ambassadors to demand in the name of the king, earth and water, which were regarded as symbols of submission.[58] The army encamped at a considerable distance from the enemy. To secure safety against surprise, the camp was surrounded by ditches and the earth that was dug out, was piled up in front. The royal tent which occupied the centre,[59] was pitched facing the east.[60] The officers and troops were then quartered in tents pitched at measured distances, according to a well laid plan. Some of the tents used for the troops were large enough to accommodate a hundred men.[61] The royal standard, which was a golden eagle fixed on a long staff, was planted in front of the tent of the king, or in his absence, before the enclosure of the commander-in-chief.[62] The tents of all generals had their special ensigns, by which they were easily distinguished.[63] At night, sentinels were posted around the camp [64] and fires were lighted.[65] Scouts were mounted during the day on high places to observe the movements of the enemy, and whenever they obtained useful information, the captain of the scouts hastened with it to the camp.[66] When all preparations were completed, the king drove forth in a chariot with his scribe, and made personal inspection of the army company by company,[67] or, seated on an elevated place, watched his troops march past him.[68] According to the custom already referred to, the officers and men never showed their hands in the presence of the king, but passed them in the sleeves of their robes or tunics.[69] The king usually acted in matters of warfare in consultation with his commanders, or with the tributary chiefs, who had joined him on the battlefield.[70]

[57] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 1. 29.
[58] Herod. 6. 48; 7. 32.
[59] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 5. 8.
[60] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 5. 3.
[61] Xen. *Cyrop.* 2. 1. 25.
[62] Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 1. 4; *Anab.* 1. 10. 12.
[63] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 5. 13.
[64] Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 5. 14; 7. 2 1.
[65] Herod. 4. 134, 135; Xen. *Cyrop.* 4. 5. 13.
[66] Herod. 7. 208; Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 3. 5, 6.
[67] Herod. 7. 100.
[68] Herod. 7. 44.
[69] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 10; *Hellenics,* 2 1. 8.
[70] Herod. 1. 206; 7. 11; 8. 67, 101.

In fixing the order of the battle, the centre was regarded as the place of safety, and consequently the infantry was placed there. When the king led the armies himself, he remained in the centre, mounted on horseback, and surrounded by a mounted guard.[71] When the chariots were used in the battle, they were stationed in the front, with the cavalry on the two wings.[72]

The first line of foot soldiers was several men deep. They darted their arrows from behind the rampart of their shields,[73] and were followed by the javelin throwers and slingers. Xenophon relates that huge moving towers were fixed on wagons, drawn by sixteen oxen, and mounted by twenty men with their javelins and slings.[74] We find that an elephant corps was brought to the field in the battle of Arbela by the last of the Achaemenians.[75] When the enemy was at close quarters, the battle cry was raised with the singing of war songs, and the troops were ordered to attack.[76] When the king was himself in command, he conducted the attack, or watched the battle from a distance.[77]

When the enemy had taken refuge in his country, and shut himself within his defences, the place was besieged. Such sieges sometimes lasted for a considerable time, before the town was captured by stratagem, or forced to capitulate owing to the shortage of provisions.[78] Mounds of earth were heaped up against the walls of the town to facilitate scaling,[79] towers were erected near the walls, and ladders were placed to climb up,[80] the walls were often undermined to make a breach,[81] or arrows with pieces of lighted tow attached to them were darted to set fire to the barricade.[82]

**The fleet.** The Persians were not a nautical people, and though their vast conquests had made them masters of the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Caspian, and the Mediterranean Seas, they had no dockyards, and built no ships.[83] For service on the

[71] Xen. *Anab.* 1. 8. 24, Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 533.
[72] See Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 182, 533.
[73] Herod. 9. 61.
[74] Xen. *Cyrop.* 6. 1. 52-54; 7. 1. 39.
[75] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 532, 534.
[76] Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 1. 25, 26.
[77] Herod. 7. 212.
[78] Herod. 3. 151, 152.
[79] Herod. 1. 162.
[80] Xen. *Cyrop.* 7. 2. 2.
[81] Herod. 4. 200; 5. 115; 6. 18.
[82] Herod. 8. 52.
[83] Cf. Herod. 1. 143.

sea, they depended entirely upon their subject races, to whom heralds were dispatched with royal command in time of war, to supply contingents of ships and transports for the fleet.[84] When the Phoenicians were subdued, they supplied the main sea-service,[85] but later, over a dozen naval states thus contributed to the making of the Persian fleet.[86] Besides this, the people dwelling by the sea were compelled to furnish ships and men for the Persian fleet, when it passed by their countries.[87] Six hundred large vessels sailed for Ionia with Darius,[88] and altogether five thousand heavy and light boats and transports are said to have formed the fleet of Xerxes, when he carried his legions into Greece.[89] The ships employed were of different classes, some were big enough to accommodate about two hundred and thirty persons, some were thirty or fifty oared galleys, and others were light boats.[90] The crews of the vessels were composed of those nations, which supplied the ships. The largest class of ships was each manned by two hundred foreign sailors, and carried thirty fighting men, who were always Persians, Medes, and Sacae.[91] The commanders of the fleet were Persians of distinction.[92] The chief in command was responsible for the safety of the fleet, and the discipline of the crews and fighting men. He went his rounds to visit the watches on board the ships,[93] and issued orders to his staff. When the king accompanied the fleet, he regulated the conduct of the fight in consultation with the chief commanders. When the great fleet of Xerxes was ready for action against the enemy, he sat in a vessel under a golden awning, and sailed round the entire fleet, making enquiries and ordering his scribe to note down important matters.[94] When the battle had begun, he watched it from the shore,[95] and whenever he saw any of his captains performing worthy exploits, he had his

[84] Herod. 6. 48; 7. 1, 21.
[85] Herod. 3. 19.
[86] Herod. 3. 44; 4. 89; 5. 26; 6. 6; 7. 21, 89-95, 123.
[87] Herod. 7. 110, 115, 122.
[88] Herod. 4. 87; 6. 9. 95.
[89] Herod. 7. 89, 97, 184, 185.
[90] Herod. 7. 97, 184.
[91] Herod. 7. 96, 184.
[92] Herod. 4. 167; 5. 32; 7. 97; 8. 89, 130.
[93] Herod. 5. 33.
[94] Herod. 7. 100.
[95] Herod. 8. 69.

scribe record his name,[96] or whenever he thought it necessary, he embarked in a vessel.[97]

Just as the tributary nations were compelled to furnish ships and crews, so were they compelled to dig canals,[98] to build bridges of boats,[99] or to make cables of papyrus and flax for the bridges.[100] Xerxes constructed two floating bridges of boats, ranged close together with a wooden platform which was covered with earth and brushwood, and flanked by high bulwarks on both sides. The two bridges connected the Asiatic and European shores. His infantry and cavalry passed over one bridge, and the sumpter beasts and camp followers crossed by the other.[101]

**The naval fight.** The chief naval tactics employed by the Persian fleet was to row their vessels skilfully at full speed against those of the enemy, and to hurl them against the vulnerable parts of the enemy's ships, so as to sink or disable them. When the vessels came at close quarters, the soldiers on the ships of the fleet, fought stubbornly. The great bulk of the Persian fleet, however, was often an occasion of disaster to their masters. The ships being in such a large number were often so closely crowded together, that great confusion resulted, and better chances of attack were afforded to the enemy, who advantageously handled his comparatively fewer vessels in regular order, and inflicted great damage upon the Persians.[102]

**The treatment of the vanquished.** Herodotus attests that the Persians were generous in their treatment of the vanquished, and that they were wont to show honour to an enemy who had fought valiantly.[103] The sons of rebel chiefs were treated with great consideration and, sometimes, were even given rule over their fathers' territories.[104] At times, the conquered king was made to live during the remainder of his life at the Persian court, as an honoured guest of the king.[105] Inhabitants of a captured place secured their freedom by paying tribute and submitting to military service, as required.[106] On other occasions, the prisoners of war were removed from their own country, and settled

[96] Herod. 8 90
[97] Herod. 7. 128.
[98] Herod. 7. 122.
[99] Herod 4. 85, 87; 7. 24.
[100] Herod. 7. 25, 34.
[101] Herod. 7. 55.
[102] Herod. 8. 16, 86, 89.
[103] Herod. 6. 30; 7. 181, 238.
[104] Herod. 3. 15.
[105] Herod. 1. 130, 153, 207; 3. 36.
[106] Herod. 1. 169.

in places fixed by the king.[107] The instances of harsh treatment of a dangerous enemy, or a rebel, however, are not wanting. Crucifixion, or mutilation of limbs were the punishments inflicted upon chief rebels.[108] The inhabitants of a place, who treacherously acted against the Persian army, were often put to the sword,[109] or were sold as slaves, the place was given over to pillage,[110] or the boys of a rebel country were made eunuchs, and girls were captured for the royal harem.[111] To avenge similar wrongs done to them, the conquering armies plundered and burned the temples of the enemy.[112]

[107] Herod. 5. 17; 6 20, 119, Strabo 16 25.
[108] Bh 1. 81-83; 2 70-90; 3. 49-52, 83-90.
[109] Herod. 3. 147, 159; 8. 53.
[110] Herod 1. 161.
[111] Herod. 6. 9 32.
[112] Herod 1. 183, 6. 9. 32, 96, 101; 8 53

# CHAPTER XXXVII

## ART AND ARCHITECTURE

**Architectural remains.** Though the ravages of time have levelled to the ground the most imposing edifices of this period, the ruins that still remain serve to reveal the departed grandeur of Persian architectural masterpieces. The modern descendants of the builders of these monuments are indebted to western scholarship and enterprise, for the revival of their architectural glory by means of elaborate archeological researches, no less than for the philological interpretation of their sacred literature. The admirable results of the laborious work of the explorers, excavators, and decipherers in the field of Iranian archeological research, during the past seventy-five years, have been published in many elegantly printed and artistically illustrated volumes.

**The royal architecture.** The archaeological remnants of this period, which enable us to form an idea of the architectural glory of the Achaemenians, are chiefly of the palaces, in which the great kings lived, and of the funerary structures which received their mortal remains. The Achaemenian kings, who restored and rebuilt the temple of a subject people[1] and who repeatedly ascribed their greatness to Auramazda, would naturally be expected to raise structural monuments of exquisite grandeur and beauty, as houses of worship. No relics, however, of the residences of the common people have yet been definitely identified. The Iranian genius in architecture has displayed its best in the construction of the palaces. Strabo mentions on the authority of Polycletus, a contemporary of Alexander, that every new king constructed a new palace, which bore his name, and had his image engraved upon it, together with a cluster of buildings, which served as treasuries and storehouses to receive the vast tributes from the subject races.[2] Pasargadae and Persepolis, Ecbatana and Susa, had their great palaces of different designs and dimensions, but small palaces were also constructed in other

[1] Ezra 1. 1-11; 3. 7; 4. 3; 6. 1-15; Is. 44. 28; 2 Chron. 36. 22, 23.
[2] Strabo 15. 3. 21.

centres of lesser importance, in the neighbourhood of the sea, or near hills noted for their bracing climate.[3] The builders of these magnificent edifices, which perpetuated in stone the names of their royal masters, drew their inspiration from Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt. Though the Persians, thus, borrowed much that was fine in the architectural treasure of the nations conquered by them, their architects adapted and assimilated, added and altered much of their own with great mechanical skill and created a style characteristically Persian. Greek artisans and craftsmen were employed in large numbers to work with the skilled Persian workmen.

**The palaces.** The outstanding feature of the royal residences is that they are constructed on elevated platforms of huge dimensions upheld by artificial platforms of hewn limestone of vast size, which could be obtained in great abundance from the rocky soil of Persia. The palaces that stood on elevated platforms, enabled their royal occupants to look down from their majestic height upon the city that stretched at their feet. The blocks of stone were fastened together without cement by metal clamps. The great platform at Persepolis is about 1,500 feet in length and about 1,000 feet in breadth, and ranges between 20 and 50 feet in height above the plain, according to the elevation of the several terraces. These high terraces are reached by elaborate staircases, so spacious, and of so gentle a slope, that a group of persons on horseback, ten abreast, can ride with ease up the double ramping flights. The grand staircase is generally considered to have no equal in ancient or modern world in point of magnificence, grandeur, and beauty.

The walls flanking the staircase are elaborately ornamented with sculptures in bas-relief representing the various scenes of the court life. The more conspicuous figures which decorate the terrace walls are of a lion combating with a bull or devouring it; of rows of guardsmen with spears or swords or shields or a bow and quiver; of household attendants carrying in hand materials for banquet or toilet; of men of conquered nations, clad in diverse costumes bringing tribute and gifts, accompanied by horses and donkeys; of cattle and sheep, chariots and camels; of beautifully carved rows of cypress trees and rosettes, and of inscriptions on tablets commemorating the name of the king.

[3] Cf. Strabo 15. 3. 3.

In the palaces at Persepolis, these ornamental sculptures are carved on stone, but at Susa where stone had to be brought from a great distance and at a considerable inconvenience, figures of archers, lions and other objects and decorations are fashioned out of enamelled clay. The art of imparting various colours by giving varying degree of heat to different clays, was borrowed by the Persians from the Chaldaeans, and was utilized in decorating the staircase, walls and other parts of the palaces.

On the grand platform stands the royal palaces, the largest of which covering an area of over 100,000 sq. ft., the private apartments, harems, and buildings to accommodate the body guards, household servants, menials, and the numerous retinue of the king; the Audience Hall in which, on great occasions, the king sat enthroned, on an elevated seat, with all regal pomp, to receive tributary chiefs, foreign ambassadors, and high personages. Two winged, human-headed bulls, Assyrian in character, flank the massive portals of the propylæa, which lead to the palace and guard the royal gates. The most conspicuous feature of the magnificent edifice, is the hypostyle construction of the hall, pronounced to be the creation of the Persian architect.[4] Here the architect manages to support the roof on fluted columns, each resting on a richly carved bell-shaped base, and gently tapering towards the top. The largest number of columns known to have supported one of the most magnificent structures, as seen from the remains still existing, is one hundred. The capital on the top of the column is regarded as typically Persian in its origin, and the most characteristic feature of the architecture of this period.[5] It consists of two bulls, or of two unicorns, with their faces turned in opposite directions, and with their legs folded back The height of each column is over sixty feet, with only two or three sections. The columns were evidently spanned by wooden beams, over which rested the elaborately constructed flat roof. In addition to inscribing his name in different parts of the royal edifices, the king has his images carved in different positions. On the doorways, he is represented as combating with conventionalized monsters; or as walking on foot, attended by bearers of umbrella, fly-flap, and royal handkerchief;

[4] Parrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia*, p 66, London, 1892.
[5] *Ib.* p. 87.

or as seated on his richly carved throne which is supported by three rows of subject nations, carved one over the other.

Besides a coat of enamel on the walls, and the use of enamelled bricks and tiles for decorative purposes, the interiors of these magnificent buildings were ornamented by rich tapestries in white and green, purple and blue, hanging from the roof. Rugs and carpets of elegant designs covered the floor.[6] Ornamental objects of Ionian workmanship and statues of marble and bronze carved by eminent Greek sculptors decorated the interior of the royal palaces.

**The royal tombs.** Among the ruins of the royal architecture of the Achaemenian kings, are found the mausoleum of Cyrus, and the rock-hewn tombs of his successors. The sepulchre of Cyrus, originally surrounded by a colonnade, is constructed of huge blocks of white sandstone, fastened together by metal clamps, surmounted by seven graded courses which form wide steps on all four sides leading to the mortuary chamber, covered over by a pedimented roof, and reached by a very low door. The whole structure which has a pyramidal shape, measures in height from the ground to the top of the roof about thirty-five feet, and about fifty feet long and forty feet broad at the base.[7]

Another type of royal sepulchre, altogether different from the tomb of Cyrus, is to be seen in the vicinity of the great platform of the palaces, and at Naksh-i Rustam. The funerary structure of this class is made by cutting a rocky cliff and sinking the tomb deep in the face of perpendicular hill. The tomb in this case is carved at a considerable height from the ground, and is not easily accessible. It is constructed in the shape of a huge Greek cross, about seventy feet in height and sixty in breadth. In the mortuary chamber, entered from a low doorway in the centre, are to be found troughs, hewn deep in the stone floor to receive the king and his dear ones to lie in eternal rest. In its external feature, the tomb represents the façade of a palace. Four bull-headed columns, two on each side of a double recessed doorway, support an entablature. Over this is the exquisitely carved throne consisting of two stages in bas-reliefs, depicting the figures of the vassal nations. Here on a pedestal on the stage, stands the king with his left hand resting on a bent bow

[6] Cf. Esther 1. 5-7.
[7] Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 288, New York, 1906.

and the right hand raised in pious adoration of Auramazda, whose winged effigy is seen floating above. Facing the monarch, is the sacred fire burning in the vase, and the sun shining high up behind the divine figure. The different tombs of this class are all built on the model of the tomb of Darius, who affixes his signature and describes in brief his achievements and exhortations for truth in trilingual inscription.[8]

**Cuneiform inscriptions.** As the magnificent royal structures were designed to perpetuate the greatness and glory of the mighty rulers, more direct means were adopted to inscribe their achievements in stone, in cuneiform script which was borrowed from the Babylonians and Assyrians. The inscriptions are carved in no less than three languages, the original in official Persian, and two versions in Babylonian and Elamitic. Twenty-five centuries have elapsed, since the ingenious sculptors chiselled on the portals and palace walls, the platform and tombs, rocks and pillars, in wedge-shaped writing, the glorious records of their royal masters, yet the inscriptions have survived the ravages of time to commemorate the past greatness of the Persian kings.

The cuneiform inscriptions lay dumb and dead for ages, and their modern decipherment will remain a memorable achievement of the nineteenth century. It has fallen to the lot of a noble band of western scholars and travellers to discover and decipher the inscriptions, and to force them to yield up their secrets. Most noted among these, are Grotenfend, the first to discover the key to unlock the great treasure, and Rawlinson, the foremost to make the inscriptions known to the world in a way that will know no death. Well have they earned the blessings of Darius, which he pronounces with prophetic insight in his great inscriptions at Behistan, upon those who would rescue his record from oblivion.

**The glyptic art.** The art of cutting and engraving seals, signets and gems was developed to a considerable extent, and the precious remains discovered of this art, represent various themes worked by the artist. A signet-cylinder of Darius, for example, has the king's name engraved on it in a trilingual inscription. The king is represented as hunting a lion from his chariot, driven by a charioteer standing in front of him. The beast is shown standing on his hind legs and is pierced with two arrows,

[8] *Ib.* pp. 296-300, 319.

and a young lion has fallen on the ground. The hunting scene is enclosed between two palms, and the conventional divine figure is carved floating above. Another cylinder depicts the king with his quiver thrown behind his shoulder, and holding an enemy with one hand, and piercing him with a spear held in the other. The enemy is seen bending on one knee and turning for mercy, and four other foes are standing behind the king with their hands behind their backs and their necks tied by a rope. A Persian archer, the king combating with one or two animals, and similar designs are to be noticed on the extant specimens of the glyptic art of the Achaemenians.[9] We have already seen, that the gold and silver coins struck during the period, are mostly inartistic in design, with uncouth likenesses of the kings in different poses, carved on one side, and with various designs on the reverse.

[9] Cf. Perrot and Chipiez, *op. cit.* pp. 451-457.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

## DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

**Dress.** In their early poor condition, when the Persians had not yet risen to eminence, they wore garments made of leather.[1] Like many other things which they borrowed from the Medes, when they replaced them in power, they adopted the Median dress, recognizing it as superior to their own.[2] Strabo relates that the tiara, tunics with sleeves reaching to the hands, and trousers suitable to the cold climate of Media, were adopted by the Persians, though they lived in a warmer climate in the south.[3] The robe of honour which formed the special gift, when the king wished to bestow a mark of royal favour upon deserving persons, was always known as the Median robe.[4] This robe was usually of purple or scarlet colour.[5] It was considered indecorous to leave any part of the body bare,[6] consequently, the dress covered an individual from head to foot.[7] Triple drawers, a double tunic with sleeves reaching to the knees, a white undergarment with the upper garments of different colours, constituted the dress of the chiefs. They wore a cloak of purple or violet or of other variegated colours.[8] The head was covered with a turban,[9] which according to Strabo, resembled that of the Magi,[10] or with a fillet, or with a piece of fine linen wrapped round the head.[11] A linen shirt was worn next to the skin. A tunic made of leather or of coarse or fine cloth, with loose sleeves worn over the under-shirt, covered the body from the neck to the ankle, and fitted it tightly. Around the waist, was a girdle knotted at the front. A pair of ordinary or embroidered

[1] Herod. 1. 71.
[2] Herod 1. 135
[3] Strabo 11. 13 9
[4] Herod 3 84, 7 116, Xen *Cyrop* 8 3. 1
[5] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 3.
[6] Rapp, *The Religion and Customs of the Persians and other Iranians*, tr Cama. pp. 311, 312.
[7] Strabo 11. 13 9.
[8] Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[9] Herod. 5. 49.
[10] Strabo 15 3. 19.
[11] Strabo 15. 3. 19.

trousers, with a pair of drawers underneath, covered the lower part of the body. The feet were covered with deep double shoes, which in the case of the rich people were put on over stockings.[12] The rich covered their hands and fingers with hair-gloves in winter.[13] They made their robes of various colours and wide, loose and long in shape, to impart dignity to their persons.[14]

The magi wore the woolen tiara which had long flaps on each side, with which they covered the mouth.[15] The white robe and other garments, worn by the Magi, resembled the Median dress.[16]

The king's dress naturally excelled that of all in outward pomp and beauty. The cap was made of stiffer material, and was higher than that worn by any of the subjects. It assumed a broader circular shape, as it reached the flat top, and a blue fillet, spotted with white, encircled it at the bottom.[17] The members of the royal family wore an upright tiara on the head, with a band around it.[18] Richest purple silk, with or without embroidery in gold, was used for the royal robe, which was made to tighten the body on the neck and chest, and made of loose folds.[19] The king wore a vest of purple colour mixed with white, which mixture of white was not allowed to other persons.[20] The trousers were usually crimson in colour,[21] and shoes of yellow or saffron hue, buttoned in the front, covered the royal feet.[22]

**Ornaments.** As the Persian sculptures give us no representations of women, and as the classical writers, on whom we depend mainly for an account of the life of the Persians of this period, do not describe the costume of women, we have no information regarding the ornaments used by the fair sex. We learn, however, that the king and nobles adorned their persons with golden ear-rings and bracelets, and a golden collar around the neck.[23]

[12] Strabo 15. 3. 19
[13] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 8. 17.
[14] Rapp, *op. cit.* p. 341.
[15] Strabo 15. 3 15.
[16] Cf. Rapp. *op. cit* p. 225.
[17] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies,* 3. 205
[18] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 3. 13.
[19] Rawlinson, *op. cit.* 3. 202.
[20] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8 3. 13.
[21] *Ib.*
[22] Rawlinson, *op cit.* 3 204.
[23] *Ib* 3. 207, 208.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## FOOD AND DRINK

**Food.** In their earlier days, when the conquests of different countries had not brought them vast riches, and acquainted them with luxurious food and delicacies, the Persians contented themselves with plain and simple food.[1] But as they rose in power and wealth, the rich among them stocked their tables with delicious courses, sweets, and delicacies. New dishes and sauces were contrived by clever cooks for the rich.[2] Wheat and barley among the grains, and the flesh of goats and sheep, oxen and asses, horses and camels, stags and wild-boars, geese and ostriches, with poultry, fish, and fruits formed the chief articles of food consumed by different classes, as their means permitted.[3] Persian entertainments were very expensive, says Strabo Entire animals, he adds, were brought upon the table.[4] Meat was either boiled or roasted, or sometimes the animal was cooked whole.[5] At religious festivals, when an animal was sacrificed, it was cut into pieces and boiled, and when the priest had finished his ceremony over the flesh, it was used for food.[6] Cyrus entertained his army with sheep, goats, oxen, and bread.[7] It is said, that no less than fifteen thousand persons were fed daily by the kings, within the boundary of the palace, and a thousand beasts, with large numbers of feathered game and poultry, were required for each repast.[8] Herodotus states that the Persians ate more of deserts than solid dishes, and adds that the deserts were not served on the table, all at once, but by short intervals.[9] In former times, the people were accustomed to have only one

[1] Herod. 1. 71.
[2] Xen. *Cyrop.* 8. 8. 16.
[3] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 214, 235-237.
[4] Strabo 15. 3. 19
[5] Herod. 1. 133.
[6] Herod. 1. 132
[7] Herod. 1. 126.
[8] Rawlinson, *op. cit* 3. 214.
[9] Herod. 1. 133.

full meal a day.[10] Poor people sat on the floor to partake of their meals, but rich families used tables for the purpose.

**Drink.** Herodotus states that the Persians were not acquainted with the luxury of wine in their earlier days, and drank water only.[11] Cyrus, the founder of the empire, is shown serving wine to his army.[12] The fondness for drinking wine later grew among the people of all classes, and large quantities were consumed.[13] It became a matter of pride for a man to be able to drink and bear much wine[14] Affairs of importance were discussed at night, under the exhilarating influence of wine, and, in the morning, the master of the house laid the results of deliberation before all for their approval.[15] Rich families used ornamented cups to drink wine.[16] The office of cup-bearers, who served wine at the royal court, was a position of honour.[17] At royal banquets, rich wine was served to the royalty in golden goblets, whereas the others shared an inferior beverage.[18] Strabo states that the royal wine was imported from Syria.[19]

[10] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 11; 8. 8. 9.
[11] Herod. 1. 71.
[12] Herod. 1. 126
[13] Herod. 1. 133.
[14] See Rapp, tr. Cama, p. 285.
[15] Herod. 1. 133, cf Strabo 15. 3 19.
[16] Strabo 15. 3. 19.
[17] Herod. 3 34.
[18] Rawlinson, *op cit.* 3. 214, 215.
[19] Strabo 15 3. 22.

## CHAPTER XL

## AMUSEMENTS

**Diversions and sports.** We have not much information regarding the amusements, indulged in by ordinary people. Foot races and horse races, wrestling and javelin throwing, swimming, and other athletic sports, formed part of the training of the youth. Indulgence in some of these sportive exercises, or witnessing them as performed by others on festive occasions, probably served the common people, as a means to amuse the mind and beguile time. Musical instruments, we have seen, were employed in war, and the army marched to the sound of pipes and the beating of drums. Similarly, they formed part in the royal processions, and on occasions of public rejoicing, but we do not know, to what degree of perfection music was cultivated in the private life of the people. It is certain, that it never formed a concomitant to religious services, and Herodotus, who describes the mode of sacrificial ritual, attests that it was accompanied by the sound of no musical instrument.[1]

Plutarch states that the king often beguiled his royal cares by playing dice in the palace with the members of his family. The stakes often rose to a thousand gold coins, or for the persons of slaves and eunuchs.[2]

**The chase.** The chief source of amusement of the king and courtiers and men of upper classes was hunting Stags and antelopes, wild asses and wild boars, bears and leopards were the usual chief game.[3] We have already spoken of the signet cylinders and gems with the king's figure engraved upon them, representing him as hunting a lion from his chariot. The king, as a rule, was accompanied on the hunt by his favourites and great persons of the realm.[4] It was, however, an act of unpardonable affront to the king for any one of the royal party to discharge his arrow,

[1] Herod. 1. 132.
[2] Plutarch, *Artaxerxes*, 3. 464, 465.
[3] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 4 7.
[4] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 9.

before the king had darted his own.[5] Trained Indian dogs were employed to course the game.[6] In chasing the wild ass, a relay of horses, with hunters on their back, were stationed at different places to enable a continued pursuit at full speed of the swift running ass, so that when one horse faltered through exhaustion, another might at once be ready with a new hunter to keep up the chase, until the chased animal was tired out and came within the shooting range.[7] Besides hunting in the wide plain, the king had certain places, called paradises, derived from the Avestan *pairi daeza*, 'enclosure,' specially set apart for the purpose of lighter chase. These were large places, well-watered with running brooks, thickly wooded, and fenced on all sides. Within these royal preserves, in which none except the king could hunt, was kept small game, which the king hunted, when he was not in a mood to exert himself in the open woods.[8]

[5] Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, 3. 227.
[6] Cf Herod 1 192.
[7] Xen. *Anab.* 1. 5. 2
[8] Xen. *Cyrop.* 1. 3. 14.

# A PERIOD OF STAGNATION

From B.C. 330 to A.D. 225

## CHAPTER XLI

## ZOROASTRIAN CIVILIZATION ARRESTED

**Under the foreign yoke.** Full five and a half centuries of foreign rule intervened between the passing away of the Achaemenian power and the time when the Parthian Empire fell at the feet of Artakhshir. The history of the Zoroastrian Civilization, during this long period of subjection, is lost in obscurity. The Medes and Persians of Western Iran, with their Magi priests, were now united with the Bactrians and their Athravan priests of Eastern Iran. Alexander's successors could not long maintain their power, and a century after the death of the great conqueror, when their power was taken over by the Parthians, it was found that they had left no indelible marks of their own civilization in Persia. Even the externals of Iranian life were not touched by the spirit of Hellenic Civilization. The Parthians who emerged on the scene from the east of the Caspian Sea, were a hardy, mountainous people, vastly inferior to the Persians in point of civilization. Persian art and architecture, institutions and customs greatly influenced the Parthians. They adopted Iranian names, and adored Zoroastrian angels. The Magi held high offices at the Parthian court, especially in the early days of its rule.[1] In the management of their own affairs, the Persians enjoyed greater liberty under the Parthians, than under the immediate successors of Alexander. They were allowed to govern themselves by their own laws and institutions, and the princes of their race, who undertook to pay fixed tributes to the Parthian king, and to help him in war with their armies, were permitted to rule over their people, as tributary chiefs.

No records of the life of the people during these five centuries have reached us, and we are not in a position to trace the process of their cultural movements until the rebirth of the Zoroastrian Empire in the early part of the third century.

**Contact with foreign movements during the period of subjection.** Greeks and Macedonians had flooded Persia in the train

[1] See my *Zoroastrian Theology*, pp. 185, 186, New York, 1914.

of Alexander, and all important offices in the country under the Seleucids were held by them. When the Greco-Macedonian rule was supplanted by the Parthian, the contact of Persia with the people of the West, did not cease entirely. The Parthians took pride in calling themselves Philhellenics, and had a veneer of Greek Civilization. Parthia, besides, was in constant war with Rome, and Roman legions penetrated the Parthian regions. The Persians now living as a subject people in the land of their ancestors, had thus the opportunity of keeping uninterrupted, their intercourse with the West, which had first begun under the early Achaemenians. It was at this period that the worship of Mithra, a Zoroastrian angel, strongly influenced the western armies. Among his many functions, Mithra was also the angel of war. When the Parthian and Roman armies fought with fluctuating result, Mithra triumphed in completely conquering the Roman soldiers to his cult. When the warlike votaries of Mithra returned to Europe, they sowed the seeds of the Mithraic cult in Rome, as early as the second half of the first century B C. The new cult spread far and wide in Europe, until in 307 A.D., Diocletian officially recognized Mithra as the Protector of the Roman Empire.

Christian propaganda now spread in Persia, which, as we shall have occasion to see in subsequent pages, was destined to grow into a great spiritual force to confront the state religion of Sasanian Iran.

**The Avestan and Old Persian languages supplanted by the Pahlavi.** The most significant change that took place during the alien rule in Persia, was the passing away of the Avestan tongue of the Kianians, and of the Old Persian of the Achaemenians. The way in which the new language originated, and the process of the Semitic admixture with the Aryan language of the people, are enveloped in darkness. The name of the new language is Pahlavi, supposed to be cognate with Parthava or Parthian, meaning heroic.

The Pahlavi language is an admixture of Aryan and Semitic. The Aryan element in the Pahlavi language is the natural heritage that it derives from its mother tongue, the Avesta. The Semitic element is the Aramaic, which closely resembles Syriac. Words of the most common occurrence, pronouns, particles, numerals, and auxiliaries are in a large measure Aramaic. To

these Semitic borrowings are tagged Iranian terminations, and it is the Iranian syntactical structure of the language, that rescues it from being classed under the Semitic group. This Semitic element that has encroached upon the Iranian language of the period, is termed, Huzvarish, meaning, obsolete. The Semitic words, it is generally believed, served only as ideograms, that is, they were not read, as they were written. For example, the writer of the text wrote the Semitic word *lahmā,* 'bread,' but when he read it, he pronounced it *nān,* the Iranian equivalent which means bread.

The Pahlavi is written in Aramaic character, and, like most Semitic languages, is penned from right to left. The alphabet contains an extremely limited number of letters, not more than fourteen. A simple character, consequently, has more than one phonetic value attached to it. Thus, when one written sign symbolizes various sounds, and leads to a number of readings of an obscure word, it renders the text most ambiguous and difficult to understand

The sacred works written in the Avestan tongue soon became unintelligible to all but the learned priests, who now undertook their translations and explanations in the new language of the people. These explanations or commentaries, called *āzainti* in Avesta, as we have already seen, and *Zand* in the later tongue, began to be prepared in Pahlavi, during this period, and continued into Sasanian times.

# THE SASANIAN PERIOD

From 226 A.D. to 651 A.D.

## CHAPTER XLII

## THE SASANIANS

**The resuscitation of the Zoroastrian Empire.** The Kingly Glory, symbolic of the power and greatness of the Persians, once again clave unto a brave, stalwart son of the house of Sasan, a scion of the royal family of the Achaemenians, after whose name the last Zoroastrian dynasty of Persia is known in history. Artakhshir Papakan founded the Sasanian dynasty, which lasted for four centuries Sasanian royalty had a great past in the glorious achievements of the Achaemenian kings, whose lawful descendants they always proclaimed themselves. Every powerful king who ascended the throne thought it his bounded duty to regain all territories once possessed by the Achaemenians, and lost at the time of the Alexandrian conquest. The Sasanians thus nursed the thought of revenge, and aspired to revive the past glory. This ambition was manifested in the wars of conquest waged by its great kings, with the result that the people seldom enjoyed an undisturbed period of tranquillity. The rulers were so much absorbed in organizing and conducting wars, that the higher pursuits of life were, to a great extent, relegated to the background Yet to their credit it may be said that the Sasanian monarchs found time, in the midst of an incessant rattle of swords to advance architecture, expressive of the life of the times, and which, as we shall see later, has left an indelible impress on the designs adopted by their Mohammedan successors.

The dream of reviving the Achaemenian Empire with all its splendour and riches was realized in the reign of Khusru Parviz, the most noted for magnificence, and gorgeous splendour, of all the Sasanian monarchs. But the empire's star, hitherto in the ascendant, was beginning to sink, with the decay of the empire's manhood which was fast setting in. Civilization brought lassitude, a love of ease, and undermined their character. People emulated court luxuries and abandoned themselves to unbridled indulgence, which rendered them effeminate. Social disintegration, moral laxity, intrigue, and disunion plunged the country

into a chronic state of civil war, and sapped the vitals of the empire. The people were torn with internal dissensions. The country was left bleeding and exhausted by long wars. The empire was gasping in the last throes. When, therefore, the Arab hordes, burning with the fervour of a new faith and pulsating with the vigour of a youthful race, poured down upon Persia, bent, as it was, under the infirmities of age, they succeeded in wresting the sceptre from her hands. Thus, the fortune of Zoroastrian Persia fell, never again to rise.

The Arabs assimilated themselves to the Sasanian system of administration, and took over unaltered their land system and organization.

**Their characteristics.** The Sasanians were a handsome race of men with a graceful carriage and manly bearing. They were full of life and gay of disposition. The sporting instinct was a marked trait in their character, as it had been with ancient Iranians. They retained the aptitude of their ancient race to assimilate new ideas. The trait of adaptability which they had inherited from the Achaemenians made them imitative. They were not endowed with richness of imagination. They acted from the impulse of the moment and were easily inflamed into passion. Theirs was a mercurial temperament. They were alert of mind and enthusiastic, but their enthusiasm was of a type that rapidly glows to white heat, and cools equally soon. They had no genius for commerce. Like their early kinsmen, the Achaemenians, the Sasanian people were noted for their loyalty to the person of their ruler. The foremost title which the Sasanian monarchs assumed when they donned the crown was 'the Divine.' Thus divinity hedged the king and conferrred upon him absolute right to rule. Providence had placed the people under his sway and theirs was the duty to yield him loyal homage, and complete submission. The aristocracy, in their turn, held the people in thrall in the name of the king, and dried up the springs of patriotism. The powerful Mobad hierarchy, whom even the king often dreaded, fettered reason in the name of religion, and enforced orthodoxy with threats of punishment in both the worlds. Men and women were drilled from infancy to bow the head before temporal power, and bend the knee before spiritual authority. Both king and priest contributed towards the enfeebling of individuality.

**The Sasanians in their intercourse with the civilized peoples of their time.** We have seen that the Achaemenians in their days had intercourse with the most cultured peoples of the world. Their successors in power had a longer lease of life during which they had direct contact with some of the most advanced peoples of their time. Two great religions, Judaism and Christianity, thrived in Persia alongside of Zoroastrianism, the faith of the ruling nation. The Jewish people lived in close contact with the Sasanians, as they had during the Achaemenian period, but, judging from the Pahlavi texts, we find that the relation between the Zoroastrians and the Jews of this period were mostly unfriendly. The Achaemenian kings were liberators of the Jews, and they were the beloved of the Jewish God Their descendants, it seems, did not retain this favour of the God of their subject race. The Pahlavi writers are unsparing in their denunciation of the religious doctrines of the Jews, and inveigh in bitter terms against the marriage of Persians with Jewish women.[1] The Sasanians had found Christianity firmly established in Persia, when they came to power. The Christian population was allowed to make its own laws and manage its own affairs unmolested, under the condition that the appointment of the highest official of the Christian Church was to be made with the approval of the king. This system inaugurated by the Sasanian rulers has survived the downfall of their empire, and is still in vogue in the Ottoman Empire in relation to their Christian subjects.[2] Christians often became court physicians, rose to high offices in the country, and Christian Bishops often joined Persian embassies to Christian countries.[3] But the relations of the two peoples were not always happy. Christianity made converts from the highest ranks of the ruling people, and claimed some of their great saints from the fold of Zoroaster.[4] Sasanian Persia, again, was in a perennial state of war with Byzantine Rome, which had embraced Christianity. The tides of war ebbed and flowed, and it is natural that the sympathy of the Christian population of Persia would go for their Roman co-religionists. Moreover, the feelings of the two peoples were

[1] For ref. see my *Zoroastrian Theology*, pp. 200, 201, New York, 1914.
[2] Wigram, *The Assyrian Church*, pp. 95, 96, London, 1910.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 210, 212, 225, 250, 253, 300
[4] See my *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 201.

often embittered by the fanatical zeal of the priests on both sides, and ended in open strife, destructions of the Zoroastrian temples and Christian churches, and the ultimate persecution of the Christians. The resemblances between Zoroastrianism and Christianity, as regards their fundamental teachings, are very great. Zoroastrianism, as seen in former pages, has influenced Judaism, and through it Christianity in its formative stages. But the ethics of the two religions present a glaring distinction. The keynote of Zoroastrianism is struggle, which is apt to develop stern virtues in man. Christianity, on the other hand, is a religion of sorrow, and recommends tender virtues in its adherents. The two great religions lived side by side in Sasanian Persia. Christianity encouraged monastic virtues, it glorified a life of celibacy, poverty, sacrifice, and suffering. The two ideals clashed, and the Zoroastrian priests denounced the mode of life that the Christian settlers led at their very gate.[5] Yet they saw before their eyes the serene fortitude, passionate zeal, warmth of feelings, deep devotion, and unfaltering readiness with which the Christians, as well as the Zoroastrian renegades to the rival faith, resigned themselves to persecution and its attendant sufferings. The Sasanian religion made apostacy a capital crime. Yet there were persons, and those often of the highest ranks, who substituted the cross for the fire, and cheerfully faced all hardships.[6] Among these were men, for example, like the famous Zoroastrian *andarzpat*, 'religious preceptor,' who embraced Christianity; and rose to the position of Patriarch under the name Mar Aba the Great. The law of the country condemned an apostate to death, and the Zoroastrian priesthood clamoured for his capital punishment, as they did later to secure the royal order to cast his body to the dogs, when he died, but King Noshirvan entertained such great admiration for the lofty character of the Patriarch, that he tried to postpone his case as long as he could, and, when obliged to imprison him and to send him into exile, to allay the fury of the powerful hierarchy, he did not lessen his respect for him, and ultimately released him.[7] The high idealism exhibited by those Christians who nobly translated the moral precepts of the founder of their religion in their exem-

[5] Wigram, *op. cit.* p. 64; Elisaeus, *History of Vartan*, p. 13, London, 1830.

[6] Wigram, *op. cit.* pp. 32, 33.

[7] *Ib.* pp. 184, 200-209.

plary lives must have impressed their Zoroastrian neighbours. The ascetic virtues of the Christian Church failed to exert their direct influence upon the Zoroastrian writings of this period, but it is not altogether improbable that when the Dinkard, for example, lays great stress on the baneful influence of the flesh over the spirit, and extols poverty, its authors occasionally thought in terms of the ethics of the alien faith that thrived in their midst.

We have stated above that throughout their life of four hundred years the Sasanians were in direct intercourse with the West. Sasanian architecture, as we shall see later, has not escaped Byzantine influence. Roman engineers of Valerian built the great dyke at Shuster [8] and Roman workmen worked the Persian gold mines.[9] Roman merchants traded in Persia, and Greek physicians were maintained at the royal court.[10] Tansar, the talented Dastur, is reputed to have been a Platonist, and Neo-Platonism had penetrated to Persia [11] An eclectic religion of great force appeared in Persia, called Manichaeism, after its founder Mani. Though relentlessly persecuted in the country of its origin, it spread throughout Central Asia, and Africa, and in the fourth century invaded Europe, where it powerfully contested religious supremacy in the Roman Empire down to the Middle Ages. The greatest figure of the Christian Church of the time, St. Augustine, was a professed follower of the new faith for several years of his life, and, even when he later ceased to be its adherent, he could not free himself from the influence of its teachings, especially its strong dualistic philosophy, inspired by Zoroastrianism, and imparted it to Christian doctrine.[12] King Ormazd II is said to have had a strong inclination towards Greek culture.[13] King Noshirvan, himself a student of Plato and Aristotle, had welcomed the Greek philosophers to his court, when they were driven out by Justinian, and the philosophical schools in Athens were closed by the emperor.[14] Several Greek

[8] Tabari, tr. Nöldeke, *Gechichte der Perser und Araber zur zeit der Sasaniden*, p. 33, Leyden, 1879.
[9] Rawlinson, *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 264, 285.
[10] *Ib.* p. 449.
[11] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., vol. 144, p. 186.
[12] Windelband, (Eng. tr. Tufts), *A History of Philosophy*, p. 286, New York, 1905.
[13] For ref. see Rawlinson, *op. cit.* p. 141.
[14] *Ib.* pp. 448, 449.

philosophical and scientific works were translated into Pahlavi. This Pahlavi version of Greek Philosophy and Science later supplied the materials with which the Arabs built their great systems of Arabian Philosophy and Arabian Science.

India may be mentioned as another great country that influenced Sasanian Persia The game of chess, as we shall have occasion to see in subsequent pages, was brought to Persia in the reign of Noshirvan, and the same king, who always patronized literature, had the famous Sanskrit literature of fables translated into Pahlavi. The Persians in this case are seen playing their characteristic role of transmitters of the cultural treasures gleaned from the people with whom they came in contact. Thus the royal game, as well as the renderings of the Pahlavi version of the fables, later travelled to Europe.

## CHAPTER XLIII

## PAHLAVI AND PAZAND LITERATURE

**The Pahlavi language.** As already seen, the Pahlavi language, was in vogue in Persia when the Sasanians came into power. It now became the court and ecclesiastical language of Iran, and survived the downfall of the empire by several centuries. In fact, some of the most important works that have been preserved to this day were written under the Abbasid Caliphs. It takes a long time for a language to develop into maturity, and though Pahlavi had a lease of life that extended beyond five hundred years, it never attained the buoyancy, sweetness and flexibility, that its daughter language the Modern Persian has acquired. This is because the Pahlavi language, with its limited alphabet, its inflectional poverty, and its cumbersome method of using a vast number of ideograms, was not a flexible vehicle for the expression of ideas.

**Pahlavi manuscripts.** Among the earliest Pahlavi writings now extant, is a fragmentary text on papyrus, dating probably from the eighth century, which was discovered in Egypt.[1] The oldest surviving text on paper is the Yasna manuscript, copied in India in 1323, now preserved in the Bodleian library at Oxford. The precious treasures of Pahlavi manuscripts began to leave the Persian shores in the early part of the thirteenth century, and, at the present time, when their possession is divided between India and Europe, the country of their origin can boast not a single one of note.

**The nature of Pahlavi literature.** The first duty of the learned men of this period was naturally to work at the restoration of the sacred literature, that had met with such a disastrous fate. The early Sasanian writers seem seldom to have been free from theological predispositions. The Avesta was the word of Ormazd, and it was necessary, in order to keep the divine word living among the people, that the original language now unintelligible to the people, should be rendered into the existing ver-

[1] West, *Pahlavi Literature*, in GIrPh. 2. 79.

nacular. The work of translating the Avestan texts, already begun by the Zoroastrian priests during the latter part of the Parthian period, continued with increased zeal, and elaborate commentaries were added to explain the difficulties of the original texts. A very considerable portion of this literature has reached us. In addition to this, there grew up a considerable mass of exegetical material. According to the estimate of West, Pahlavi texts amounting to some 446,000 words, dealing with various religious subjects, are now extant.[2]

As the language of the period is halting, so the thought itself is cringing. It is not free. In matters religious and theological, the writers of the period are seen constantly attempting to transplant their life to the age of the Vendidad. Rather than speak their own thoughts, they content themselves with interpreting and amplifying those of the Avestan writers. We do not meet with any signs of independent inquiry, original thought, flashes of imagination, and bold speculation on the problems of life, in the Pahlavi literature.

The author of the Dinkard informs us that when King Artakhshir, the founder of the last Zoroastrian Empire, had the collection and compilation of the scattered religious texts completed under the supervision of his illustrious Dastur Tansar, his son Shapur I ordered a collection of all available Iranian texts on secular subjects.[2a] The Sasanian kings patronized learning, and favoured the publication and translation of the best foreign works on secular subjects into Pahlavi. The movement received the greatest impetus under the enlightened rule of Noshirvan, famed in the history of the East, under the title, the Just. The famous academy that this great king established at Jund-i Shapur was frequented by the learned men of the world, and several of the best Greek and Sanskrit books, as already noted in previous pages, were rendered into Pahlavi by the royal command. No remains, however, of this literary activity which so enriched the indigenous literature with the foreign works, have been preserved in the form of books; for these Pahlavi works have been irretrievably lost. Some Pahlavi works, it seems, dealing with various subjects were preserved for a considerable time after the downfall of the empire. For, Masudi attests that he saw in the early part of the tenth century, an

[2] *Ib* 2. 90

[2a] Dk. vol 9, p. 578.

Arabic version of a Pahlavi work, which dealt with the various sciences and history of the Sasanians, illustrated with the portraits of the kings.[3] Of the secular literature originated by the Iranians themselves, all that has survived to the present day, equals about the tenth part of the works on religious subjects now extant. The extant Pahlavi literature deals with social, hygienic and legal subjects, and ethics. A solitary treatise in defence of dualism shows some approach to philosophical disquisition. A Book of Kings, called Khudai Namak, perhaps after the Chronicle of Kings of the Achaemenians, existed up to the time of Firdausi, who draws much of his materials from it. This is unfortunately lost, and we have now left with us only two short historical works, or properly speaking historical romances, one dealing with the religious wars waged by the early Kianian king, Gushtasp, during the lifetime of the prophet, and the other dealing with the life of the founder of the Sasanian dynasty.

The Pahlavi literature is younger by several centuries than the Avestan, yet although a considerable body of the Avestan poetry has been preserved, not a single line of Pahlavi poetry has come down to us. The former has survived to this day, because of its sacred character, being the integral part of the liturgy. The Pahlavi poetry has perished, because of its secular nature, though it is unfortunate that thousands of lines of prose literature, of even purely secular type, should have been preserved, while not the remotest trace should be left of its poetry.

**Pazand or Parsi.** When the Avesta became extinct as the language of common intercourse, the sacred works written in it, were, as we have seen, rendered into Pahlavi. This explanatory Pahlavi version of the original Avestan text is called Zand. But a language loaded with logograms or foreign words, which, far from being naturalized, had lingered as mere outlaws, and which the tongue held too profane to be pronounced, needed simplification. This need was supplied later by transcribing the Pahlavi text with the elimination of all foreign Huzvarish words, and replacing them by the Iranian equivalents. The script employed in such transcription during the Sasanian period is Avestan, and is called Pazand from the Avestan word *paiti zainti*, 'further explanation or added commentary.' The Pahlavi language with

[3] For ref. see Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr. Nariman, in JIA. 8. 434.

its admixture of Semitic never attained to sacred character, and prayers were never composed in the language. But with the Pazand the case was different. Several long and short expiatory, benedictory prayers, recitals in praise of the name of God, and miscellaneous formulas, were composed in this tongue during the Sasanian rule, and are used as supplementary prayers to the Avestan prayers to the present day.

With the downfall of the Zoroastrian Empire, when Persia embraced Islam, the Arabic script, sacred to the faith of the conqueror, drove out the Pahlavi script, which thereafter was confined to the learned Zoroastrian priests. In addition, therefore, to transcribing their Pahlavi texts in Avestan characters, as shown above, the priests now resorted also to the use of the Arabic characters, that is, the alphabet now employed in Modern Persian. The Pahlavi texts which they copied in this new script, substituting the Iranian equivalents for the Semitic words, wherever they occured in the original Pahlavi, is called Parsi. The Pazand mode of writing continued, side by side with the Parsi, for a considerable time, but gradually fell into disuse, and the Zoroastrian works began to be written in the Modern Persian alphabet. The Pazand thus became the intermediary between the Pahlavi and Modern Persian. The Arab conquerors succeeded in introducing their alphabet in Persia, and in giving a number of Arabic words to the Persian language, but they failed to impose their language on the people. The language of Mohammedan Persia at the present day, barring the Arabic element that has entered it, is the lineal descendant of Avesta, the sacred tongue of the Zoroastrians, that originated some three thousand years ago.

The Pazand, as it seems, was not confined to the borders of Iran, but extended even into Central Asia. Important discoveries have recently been made in Turfan, and manuscripts giving Pazand versions, in Syriac script, of Manichaean writings and fragments of the New Testament in the kindred Soghdian dialect, have been found.

**Pahlavi inscriptions.** Like their predecessors of the Achaemenian period, the Sasanian kings inscribed their doings on the rocks. The inscriptions are found scattered in Persia, generally inscribed in two different dialects, called Chaldaeo-Pahlavi and Sasanian Pahlavi. Though younger in point of time by nearly

a thousand years than the Achaemenian inscriptions, the rock-records of this last Zoroastrian dynasty are in too dilapidated a condition to furnish a continuous reading, and even where they are found of fairly considerable length, they are inferior in point of the literary style, and convey little useful information.

Besides the rock-inscriptions, there are preserved in abundance, coins, seals, and gems bearing short Pahlavi inscriptions.

It is interesting to note that there is found in India one instance of Pahlavi inscribed on rock, in which some Parsi travellers in 1009 and 1021 A.D have recorded their visits to the Kanheri caves near Bombay.[4] A copper-plate grant to the Syrian Christians of Southern India of the ninth century, bears the signatures of ten witnesses in Pahlavi script.[5]

**Specimens of Pahlavi, Pazand literature.** The following are some notable passages freely rendered into English.

To make Ormazd and the celestial beings one's own, to attain to heaven, to confound Ahriman and his infernal crew, and to escape from hell, it is said, that man should equip himself in the following manner:

'He should make wisdom his protector, should don the weapons and armour of contentment over the body, should have truth for his shield, and thankfulness for his mace, should make devotion his bow, and liberality his arrow, should make moderation his spear, perseverance his gauntlet, and fortune his shelter.'

Mkh. 43. 6-13

While pronouncing blessings upon the bride and bridegroom on the occasion of their wedding, blessings corresponding to the attributes and qualifications of the elements of nature, seasons and flowers are invoked upon them in the following words:

'May you be as sweet as rain-water, as shining as the sun, . as long-lived as the world-ruling time, as fertile as the earth, as widely connected as the waters of a navigable river, as plentiful as the winter, as joyful as the spring, as fragrant as musk, as renowned as gold, as widely famed as coined-money. . May you be blessed like the moon and the sun, the water and the fire, the wine and the myrtle, the musk and the jasamine, the rose and the sweet marjoram, . . . and may you be as fragrant as sweet basil and amber.'

Pahlavi-Pazand Ashirvad

The following are the qualifications of a good teacher:

'The preceptor should so embellish his character as to make himself a mirror into which his virtues could be reflected The disciple could

[4] West, *op cit.* 2. 79. [5] *Ib.*

then look advantageously in it and emulate his noble example But if the teachings of the preceptor are not exemplified in his own nature, and he is himself a blank, the disciple cannot benefit by his contact with him, for a man cannot see in an empty goblet, as he can in a mirror'

Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6 223, 224, p 84

Nature, we are informed, rejoices over the movements of a philanthropist:

'Happy is the land on which a philanthropist walks, happy the wind that blows over him, happy the horse which he rides, happy are the cattle on whose products he subsists, and happy indeed are the sun and the moon and the stars that shine upon him.'

Sd 79 2

Ormazd admonishes mankind through his prophet not to postpone to-day's work until to-morrow:

'Postpone not for to-morrow the good deed that thou art able to do to-day. . . Presume not, because of thy youth, that there is still time, thinking, "I will do it afterwards." There have been many men whose life, after such postponement, has been but one day. . . . Strive, therefore, not to postpone to-day's work for to-morrow For the wicked Ahriman has created two demons, one with the name Delay, and the other called Afterwards. Both these demons unite in their fight, and struggle with man, so that his work may fall behind and remain undone. When any duty and good deeds come before man, he, the demon named Delay, speaks unto him "Thou wilt live long, and wilt be able to do it at any time" And the demon who has Afterwards for his name tells him. "Leave it now, thou wilt be able to do it later" Thus do these two demons restrain the soul from performing its duty, until the end comes, the works fall behind undone, and full of sorrow and penitence, without the benefit of duty and good deeds performed, the soul leaves this world'

Sd 81. 10-18

The effect of harsh words:

'Speak not arrogant and harsh words, for whoso speaks arrogant and harsh words, is like a fire burning in a jungle, which devours ant and fowl and noxious creatures.'

AnAtM. 92

The position of the earth in the cosmos:

'The sky, and the earth, and the water, and all else that there is, is like unto an egg of a bird. The sky is arranged by the skill of Ormazd like an egg over the earth. And the earth is stationed in the midst of the sky like the yolk in an egg.'

Mkh. 44 8-10

The following is a graphic description of the hosts of war preparing for the field:

'The shouts of the hosts of Iran went up to heaven, and the sound of their tramping feet reached down to hell. The road on which they marched was so dug up, that the dust covered the waters and made them unfit to drink for a month. For fifty days it cleared not, and the birds

did not find their nests, until they rested on the heads of the horses, or on the points of the lances, or on the tops of the high hills. The clouds of dust made it impossible to discern between the night and the day.'

YtZ. 29-31

The furious onslaught of a hero upon the battlefield is described in the following words:

'And that sturdy commander, the stalwart Zarir fought as forcefully as the angel Atar, whose fire works havoc when it falls upon the mountains, and is helped by the wind. He killed ten of the Khyons at the forward stroke of the sword, and eleven of them at the backward stroke. When hunger and thirst overtook him, he saw the blood of the Khyons and was satiated.'

YtZ 70

King Gushtasp consults his great astrologer before going to the war:

'I know that thou Jamasp art wise and foreseeing And thou dost know even this that when it rains for ten days, how many drops fall on the ground and how many drops fall over the drops. And thou knowest also which trees blossom during the day, and which during the night, and which under the moon Then again, thou knowest which gentle breeze has moisture in it, and which has it not. And thou knowest even the position that the moon will occupy in the constellation of the Dragon. Tell me, therefore, which of my sons and brothers will live, and which will die in this battle of Gushtasp'

YtZ. 35-39

The wise Jamasp foretells the issue of the war in the following words:

'He is happy who is not born of his mother, or if born, is dead, or would not complete the span of his life A month from now will the stalwarts struggle with the stalwarts, and heroes fight with the heroes; many sons with their mothers will be without their fathers, and many fathers will be without their sons, and many sisters will be without their brothers, and many wives will be without their husbands. . . . Twenty three of thy sons and brothers will perish.'

YtZ 45, 46, 49

The writer of the Dinkard describes the fourfold division of society, compares them to the various parts of the human body, and determines their position in the world, in accordance with their respective usefulness:

'The position of the head in the human body belongs to the priests, the hands represent the warriors, the belly stands for the agriculturists, and the feet designate the artisans. Manifestly, in greatness and excellence, priesthood is the head of the world, the profession of the warriors stands for the hands of the world; the work of the agriculturists is for the belly of the world, and that of the artisans counts for the feet of the world.'

Dk., vol. 1, p. 37

Righteousness is thus described in a Pazand text:

'There comes a day, Spitman Zartusht, or a night, when the cattle leave the master, or the master leaves the cattle, and the soul leaves the body full of desires. Righteousness alone, which is the greatest, best, and the finest of all that is in existence, never parts from men. . . .

'The wicked acquire cattle, the wicked acquire horses, the wicked acquire flocks of sheep; but the wicked tyrant acquires not a store of righteousness. Seek for yourself, O Zartusht, ye men and women! a store of righteousness, for the store of righteousness brings complete salvation, O Zartusht! For, the ox turns to dust, silver and gold turn to dust, the valiant hero turns to dust, all mortals turn to dust, what one thing does not turn to dust is the righteousness which a man practises upon the earth!'

Aog 51, 52, 82-84

The transitoriness of earthly possessions and life are depicted thus:

'Even though a man may live a hundred years in this world, still in the end he has to wend his way to the Bridge of Judgment . . For, when the body decays and the skeleton falls, the life will forsake the body and depart, senses will then sleep and the skeleton will be useless. . The eyes that are closed will not open, the heart that is diseased will not move, the hands that are broken will not stir, and the feet that are broken will not walk . . Now will the body be placed on the bier and be removed to the Tower of Silence . . Wealth and power will then pass to the possession of another, and the wife will think of another husband.'

AnAtM 130, 142-145

The shades of death, we know, are all around, and death holds carnival. So has it always been and so shall it ever be. Name and fame, greatness and glory, power and pride all sleep in death at last. Mighty kings whose names ring through the world leave their palaces, to sleep their eternal sleep on the bare earth. Every man fills his hour upon this earth, puts off his earthly garment, and quietly passes away, when the hand of death knocks at his door and calls him. Man becomes dust and the dust does not stir, nor speak. Such is death, and it is portrayed in the following lines in a Pazand treatise.

'. . . men forget death, they think not of the working of time and the perishable nature of the body, . . . they are intoxicated with pride in their youth, they will be full of sorrow on the day of their death. If, on this material world of seven regions, one man is to die, every one should think, "Verily, I am that man." For his own good sense should inform man that unto all mortals that are created or are born, shall come the unseen, stealthy Demon of Death.

'When a man goes on a journey, he takes provisions with him. If the journey is of one day, he takes provisions for two days, if the journey is of two days, he takes provisions for three days, if the journey is of ten days, he takes provisions for fifteen days, and he knows

that he will return safe to his dear friends, parents and brothers; but men do not take provisions for that journey from which there is no return, where they must go once for all, and for all time . .

'From death no mortal can ever escape, none has escaped until now, and none shall escape hereafter; neither the priest, nor the king, neither well-wishers, nor evil-wishers. Neither those who fly up to the sky, like Kaus, for with all his power and glory, he could not escape the Demon of Death Nor those who go down to the deep, and hide themselves in the bowels of the earth, like the Turanian Afrasiyab, who built himself a palace of iron under the earth, a thousand times the height of a man, and with a hundred columns. In that palace he made the stars and the moon and the sun revolve to give light, in that palace he did as it pleased him, and he lived the happiest life. But with all his might and witchcraft, he could not escape from the Demon of Death Nor those who dig the wide, round earth, whose ends lie afar, like Zohak, who went to the east and to the west in search of immortality, but did not find it; for with all his strength and power, he could not escape from the Demon of Death Thus shall it be until the time, Soshyos, the renovator, comes, that none shall escape from the Demon of Death.

'Unto everyone comes, the unseen, stealthy Demon of Death, who accepts neither compliments nor bribe, who cares not for the nobility of birth, and who ruthlessly destroys men

'The man of glory must go the way he has never gone, must see what he has never seen, and must converse with him whom none can deceive nor overreach.

'Passable is the way traversed by a river flowing from the deep; the one way which is impassable is that of merciless death Passable is the way barred by a dragon as big as an ox, horse-devouring, man-devouring, men-killing, and dreadful; the one way which is impassable is that of merciless death. . . Passable again is the way held by a horde of spearmen, so levelling their points to kill men as not to leave even one man living, the one way which is impassable is that of merciless death.

'For, if there were or could be any escape from death, Gayomard, the first mortal upon earth, who kept this world free from death, and free from old age, and free from hunger, and free from thirst and free from conflict, would have escaped; yet when death came to him, he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death. Then, there was Hoshang, the Pishdad, who killed two-thirds of the entire evil creation of Ahriman; yet when death came to him, he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death. Then, there was Tahmuras of Vivanghan, who made Ganaminu, the demon of demons, his steed, and extorted from him the seven kinds of writings; yet when death came to him, he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death Then, there was Jamshid, possessed of good flocks, the son of Vivanghan . . . who kept this world free from old age, and who kept away greed and need from the creation of Ormazd, for six hundred and sixteen years, six months, and thirteen days; yet when death came to him, he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death Then there was Zohak of the evil faith, who kept the world under his evil sovereignty for a thousand years, less one day, and introduced into the world much witchcraft and evil-doing; yet when death came to him, he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death. Then there was Faridun, the Athwyan, who smote and bound the dragon-king Zohak, the wicked sinner, who bound the demons of Mazandaran, and introduced into the world many sacred spells; yet when death came to him he gave up his body and could in no way fight with death.'

Aog. 32-47, 58-80, 85-102

King Shapur introduces himself to posterity in his royal inscriptions as follows:

'This is the edict of me, the Mazda-worshipper, Shapur, the Divine, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of celestial descent from God, son of the Mazda-worshipper Artakhshir, the Divine, King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran, of celestial descent from God, grandson of Papak, the Divine, the King'

Hajiabad Inscription 1-4

The funeral oration which King Noshirvan prepares shortly before his death, and commands his ministers to read to the public at the time of the disposal of his dead body, reads thus:

'As soon as life separates from my body, then you should lift up this throne of mine and take it to Isfahan, and having deposited my body there, you should in a loud voice declare unto the people. "O men, abstain from committing sin and exert yourselves in the performance of meritorious deeds, and consider the wealth of this world as of no consequence. Since this is the body that was moving yesterday and people could approach it at a distance of three steps, which always and at all places increased righteousness and wealth of the world, but to-day if any one were to place his hand upon it, he would have to cleanse himself of pollution by means of ablution ceremony, or else people would neither permit him to offer sacrifices unto God nor to hold intercourse with the good. Yesterday this hand was not extended to any one, owing to the majesty or sovereignty, whereas none places his hand on it to-day for fear of pollution. People of the world, conduct yourselves in such a manner that the blessings of all may follow you. Let the conduct of your affairs be accompanied by truthful thoughts Work strenuously and zealously for mankind. Be just and discreet in your actions In matters religious, act in unison with the generous and truthful persons. Listen to the advice of those who speak to you about the hereafter, and act accordingly with discretion and sincerity. Be content with your lot and conspire not to deprive others of theirs. In your dealings with the poor, be not evasive and arrogant. Remember that wealth and affluence pass away, power and possessions turn into sorrow, adversity, and poverty. Life in this world is short, the way to the next is long; terrible is the enemy, and the judge there is upright. Merit will not be had on credit there. Practise not deceit or bribery. Mistake not your body for the soul. It will not be possible for you to cross the Bridge of Judgment, unless you have accumulated much merit. In the next world, there are judges like Mihr and Rashn. Be of good religion, and you will go to the Abode of Songs. Dispair not in quest of glory. Goodness is possible of attainment by any one, irrespective of his position. Remember that this world is transitory. Acquit yourself from the bodily toils of this world with goodness, and prepare yourself by your deeds for the spiritual world. Let this also be said, that every one should reflect. Whence have I come, why have I come hither, whither have I to go, and what shall they ask of me there? I do know that I have come from the creator Ormazd, I am here to fight evil, and I have to go back to the creator Ormazd."'

Andarz-i Khusru-i Kawatan

**Similies, metaphors, and other notable characteristics.** It is said about religion that if one proceeds three steps towards it, religion will advance a thousand steps to greet him.[6] Religion, we are informed, is as connected with the sacred spells, as

[6] Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 61, p 17.

flesh is with the skin or wax with the parchment,[7] or again it is connected with the Ahunavar formula as the hair is with the beauty of the face.[8] Religious meditation is spoken of as the armour of the soul.[9] The lodgement of angels in upright men is said to be such as is that of water in clay.[10] Regarding the watchful care that angels take of good men in this world, it is said that just as a man withholds unwholesome things from a child, which it thinks delicious, so do angels keep away harmful things from men, which they in their ignorance think good.[11] The angels, it is further added, protect and guard men in the same manner as a shepherd pastures cattle in a good field, and keeps them back from a dangerous place.[12] Ormazd's act of creating the universe from primal substance is likened to the weaver's act of weaving his cloth from wool.[13] Ormazd has so planned the affairs of the world through his forethought, that the arch-enemy of goodness will ultimately fall an impotent victim in the hands of the father of goodness, as explained in the following words: The owner of an orchard sets a snare, or a trap, to catch the wild animals and birds that destroy his fruits. When the intruders are caught in the trap, they struggle to free themselves and are ultimately exhausted, the gardener then approaches and removes them. Even so has Ormazd arranged the sky as a trap for Ahriman, with time as the exhauster of his strength to bring about his final fall.[14] The angel Srosh, it is said, acts for the soul that enters the threshold of the next world at death, in the same helpful manner as does a midwife, when a new babe is born in this world.[15] The different periods in the history of Zoroastrian Iran are represented by the various branches of a tree. The one of gold represents the glorious epoch of the coming of the prophet, and the acceptance of his faith by King Gushtasp. The other periods are represented by the various branches of silver, and other metals, until the worst times after the fall of the Zoroastrian Empire are denoted by the iron branch.[16] The chaotic and tumultuous period in the history of their country is called the wolf period, as contrasted to the

[7] Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 324, p 32.
[8] SIS. 19. 15; cf. Dk., vol. 1, p. 17.
[9] Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 266, p. 102
[10] Dk., vol. 9, p. 593.
[11] Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6 222, p. 83.
[12] Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6 E. 1, p. 1.
[13] Dk, vol. 7, p. 425.
[14] Sg. 4. 63-80.
[15] Sd. 58. 6-8.
[16] BYt. 1. 1-5; 2. 14-22.

peaceful one, which is termed the sheep period.[17] The sky is spoken of as encircling the earth, as an egg does a bird.[18] The planets are compared to the brigands and highwaymen, who rob the caravan of its goods, and are said to be depriving the gifts of Providence from the worthy, and bestowing them upon unworthy people.[19] A righteous person is declared to be as beautiful as a fair maiden and as beneficent as the sun; and it is said that he loves goodness as a father loves his son.[20] Mighty is the power of righteousness, and we are informed that if a righteous person says to a mountain with his holy tongue, 'move on,' it will move.[21] Man is admonished to be watchful of the evil that dogs his steps in this world, and is informed that just as he goes not without shoes, and moves with great caution in a place which is infested with snakes and scorpions or is full of thorns, lest the noxious creatures might sting him or the thorns might prick his feet; so should he beware of evil in his life.[22] The breath of a living being is likened to a burning flame, and it is said that, just as the fiery glow departs when inflammable material is burned up, so does life depart from the body, when breath leaves it.[23] The soul is called the tenant, who dwells in the bodily house during life, and leaves it at death, just as a man vacates one abode for another.[24] The human body is a tenement with the senses for its windows, and the soul is the owner of the house, who communicates with the outer world through these windows.[25] The soul manages the body as a householder conducts a house, or a rider manages his horse.[26] The house falls to pieces, when the main pillar gives way; even so does the body perish, when the spirit departs.[27] Regarding man's intellect, it is said, that it illumines man's soul in the same way, as the sun lights the earth and as the fire lights the house.[28] One who can control his desires is declared to be like a skilled rider, who uses his

[17] BYt. 3. 40.
[18] Dk, vol. 2, p. 79.
[19] Sg 4 24-27.
[20] Dk., vol. 6, p. 362
[21] Dk, vol 10, bk. 6. 60, p. 17.
[22] Dk, vol. 12, bk. 6 B. 47, pp 49, 50.
[23] Dd. 23. 2.
[24] Dd 23 6.
[25] Dk., vol. 1, p. 57.
[26] Dk, vol 6, pp. 353, 380, 381
[27] Dk, vol. 6, p. 353.
[28] Dk., vol. 6, p. 354.

horse as he wills.[29] Man should make himself of good nature in the following manner: Just as a carder of cotton removes dirt from cotton, so man should cleanse his mind; as a carpenter gives shape to wood, so should man give his mind a straightforward bend; as a bleacher removes pollution and gives cleanliness to clothes, so should man wash his mind of evil thoughts, and adorn it with good thoughts; and as a blacksmith heats the iron, so should man warm his piety.[30] In speaking about virtue, the Dinkard tells us that honour lies in not abstaining from practising virtue, and shame lies in not abstaining from practising vice.[31] Man should daily labour to abjure the path of wickedness and strive after righteousness, before death overtakes him, and he loses the opportunity of reforming himself. For it is said that a wicked person can be redeemed when alive, not when he is dead; just as a sick person can be cured by medicine while alive, but no amount of medicine poured in his mouth would avail when he is dead.[32] Regarding expiation, it is said that as darkness lingers not where the sun is, so sin stays not where there is expiation, for expiation is the fire that burns it.[33] A wicked man has the nature of a wolf, and it is said that it is better to smite such a two-legged wolf, than to smite a four-legged one.[34] Man is admonished that in anything that he speaks or does, he should speak with sweetness and act with humility. For sweet words, we are told, do not fill one's mouth with bad odour and humility does not break one's back.[35] Man is warned that he should use strong language cautiously. It is good at times to speak, and it is good on other occasions to be silent. But on the whole, it is better to be silent than to speak.[36] Wrath is deprecated in the following words: Eating of food is good for the body, and swallowing of wrath is good for the soul.[37] Ignorance is harmful to man, and it is declared that very often it is not possible for an enemy to do that wrong to a man, which in his ignorance he brings upon himself by his own deeds.[38] The

[29] Dk., vol. 7, p. 447.
[30] Dk, vol. 13, bk. 6 E. 22 6-8, pp 6, 7.
[31] Dk., vol 10, bk. 6. 7, p. 3.
[32] Dk., vol. 2, p. 76
[33] Dk., vol. 6, pp. 421. 422.
[34] Dk., vol. 16, bk. 8 25. 1, p 6.
[35] AnAtM. 85.
[36] AnAtM. 60
[37] Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6. E. 19, p 5.
[38] KrNArtP. 1. 43.

wealth of the world, it is said, is like a bird that flies from tree to tree, and rests not on any one of them.[39] Death is declared to be necessary in the proper working of the universe. It is explained that, as planting as well as pruning are essential to the growth of a plant, so death, though it cuts away life, hastens the perfection of the soul, hence death advances life.[40] The texts describe the condition prevailing in hell as under: Darkness in hell is said to be such as could be held by hand.[41] If all the wood in the world were put to the fire, it would not emit a smell.[42] The solitude in hell is so appalling that though the souls in hell are as many as would a thousand men be in a singe span, or though they are as close to one another as are the ears to the eyes, and as numerous as the hairs on the mane of a horse, yet every one feels himself alone.[43] The stench of hell is such as could be cut with a knife.[44] At the time of Resurrection, a wicked soul will be as conspicuous in the assembly of the righteous ones, as a black sheep among the white ones.[45] When the righteous will pass from the wicked on the Day of Resurrection, every one will shed tears which will reach the legs.[46] In the peaceful reign of Gushtasp, the wolf and the lamb drank water with one another.[47] Good men are spoken of as resembling the nature of cattle, as bad men are designated of wolfish nature.[48] The earth, it is declared, will tremble like a sheep before a wolf, when Gochihr will fall on her at the time of Resurrection.[49] When Ahriman rushed to the sky, it trembled as a sheep before a wolf.[50] It is said that the ground on which the dead body of an ungrateful person is laid, shudders as a sheep trembles before a wolf.[51] Just as a person shudders at finding a serpent or a scorpion in his sleeping garment, so does

[39] AnAtM. 88.
[40] Dk., vol. 5, p. 330.
[41] Bd. 28. 47, Mkh 7 31; AV 18
[42] AV. 54
[43] Bd. 28. 47; AV 54.
[44] Bd. 28. 47.
[45] Jsp. 3. 5.
[46] Bd 30. 14.
[47] Kaikobad, *Yunan Dastur's Epistle*, in *Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p. 506, Bombay, 1918.
[48] Dk., vol. 1, p. 48; vol. 5, p. 322.
[49] Bd. 30. 18; Jsp 3. 7.
[50] Bd. 3. 12; Zsp. 2. 2.
[51] Sd. 65. 5.

the earth tremble, when a corpse is interred in it.[52] The earth is said to be as much distressed, when a wicked person walks on it, as a mother on whose bosom is placed a dead son.[53] The stars, moon, and sun, we are told, shine unwillingly upon an unclean person.[54] It is said in praise of knowledge, that it is man's embellisher in the time of prosperity, and in the days of his adversity, it is his saviour and guardian.[55] Man's disposition graced with wisdom is like unto a clear fountain, but one without wisdom is like a fountain that is choked up.[56] It is not good to withhold knowledge from others, for it is said that a wise man who withholds knowledge from others, is like a well-watered garden bearing no fruit.[57] Regarding true friendship, man is advised not to make an old enemy his friend, for it is said, he is like a black serpent that forgets not vengeance after a hundred years. Man is, on the other hand, asked to make an old friend his new friend, for an old friend is declared to be like old wine which grows mellower and fitter to drink.[58] In the lifetime of his parents, an individual is said to be like a lion in a forest and fears none, but a man without his parents is likened unto a helpless widow.[59] A later text describes as under the condition of the soul of a person who leaves the earth without issue. A man without a son, we are told, lingers at the Bridge of Judgment, and cannot cross it, in the same manner as a man in this world finds himself in a jungle infested with wild animals, with his native town at a short distance, which he can see, but cannot reach, since a river intercepts the jungle and his town, and the only bridge to convey him over the waters to the other side, is broken.[60] A good king is said to impart lustre on all from his exalted position, even as a stream of water flowing from the top of a hill spreads verdure in the plain below, or as a fire burning on the summit of a mountain can be seen at a distance.[61] He is like a fertilizing cloud.[62] The chief of a community is like a shepherd who guards his flocks.[63] Just as fire cleanses gold and silver of all dross, so does the Kingly Glory guard every king from all improper actions.[64] Vast numbers are

[52] Sd. 33. 2.
[53] SIS. 15. 23.
[54] EpM. 2. 3. 5.
[55] Gs. 147.
[56] SIS. 20. 3.
[57] Dk., vol. 7, p. 460.
[58] AnAtM. 99, 100.
[59] AnAtM. 89.
[60] Sd. 18. 9.
[61] Dk., vol. 3, p. 180.
[62] Dk., vol. 7, p. 468.
[63] Dk., vol. 7, p. 483.
[64] Kaikobad, *op. cit.*, pp. 507, 508.

described in the following manner. It is said regarding the evil creation that Ahriman so filled the earth with noxious creatures, that they did not leave empty space of the size of the point of a needle.[65] The Guardian Spirits, it is declared, protected the sky in numbers as large as the hairs on the head.[66] Plants grew upon the earth like hair upon the head of man.[67] The eye of a greedy person is said to be a noose, in which, if the whole world falls, it is as nothing.[68] The spirit of the earth complained before Ormazd of the wrong that Ahriman had brought over it, with a cry as loud as a thousand men would make, if they cried out all at once.[69] Describing the loss caused by the slaughter of many men by an enemy, it is said that the number of men killed are so many, that a thousand women can thereafter find but one man to greet.[70] To the mind of a ruthless, wicked person, it is said, that the killing of a righteous person and a fly is but one and the same thing.[71] The words of a thousand men cannot so easily convince one man, as a single action of one man can convince a thousand.[72] To fill one's mouth with rubies and pearls is the expression used, when one wishes to reward the services of another with gifts.[73] We shall conclude by quoting a few proverbs and maxims taken from various texts: Whoso sinks a well for his enemy falls into it himself.[74] As the swiftest horse needs a whip, or the sharpest knife requires a whetstone, so also the wisest man requires counsel.[75] Poverty through honest living is better than opulence through dishonesty.[76] One truthful man is better than a world of liars.[77] A gift to the wicked is like putting a morsel in the jaws of a dragon [78] Life is changeable as the colours of the spring.[79] The heart of a liberal person is as warm as fire, that of a miser is as cold as ice.[80] Do not unto others, what is not good for yourself.[81] Speak not as if seen by you, that which is only heard by you from others.[82] Make not a writer of books your enemy.[83]

[65] Bd 3. 15, 20; Zsp. 2. 9.
[66] Bd. 6. 3; Zsp. 5. 2.
[67] Bd. 9. 3.
[68] Bd. 28. 27.
[69] Bd. 4. 2; Zsp. 3. 1.
[70] BYt. 3. 22.
[71] BYt. 2. 50.
[72] Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6. E. 15, p 4.
[73] KrNArtP. 10. 14.
[74] AnAtM. 108.
[75] SlS 10. 28.
[76] Mkh. 15. 4.
[77] Sd. 62 5.
[78] Sd. 90. 1
[79] Dk., vol 6, p. 390
[80] Dk., vol. 9, p. 555
[81] SlS 13 29; AnAtM 8.
[82] AnAtM. 15.
[83] AnAtM. 36.

# CHAPTER XLIV

## SOCIETY

**Social divisions.** The ancient fourfold division of society into priests, warriors, agriculturists, and artisans, remained intact during the Sasanian period.[1] In describing the relative position of each of these social units, the writers of the period liken the priests to the head of man, the warriors to man's hand, the agriculturists to his stomach, and the artisans to the feet of man.[2] Good nature, we are told, is the virtue of the members of the first class, resourcefulness and manliness that of the warriors, strenuous performance of tillage of the agriculturists, and diligence of the fourth class.[3] The priests, we are further informed, are the ministrants of the spiritual needs of the people, the instructors of the youth of the country, and the givers of judgments in cases of disputes; the warriors are to perform heroic deeds and serve on embassies; the agriculturists have to raise food for mankind; and the artisans have to labour with industry and skill.[4] The members of the four classes of society, thus, serve the community by their respective work in such a manner that the priests enlighten, the warriors protect, the agriculturists nourish, and the artisans provide comfort.[5] The work of the priests, the writers add, is of the highest merit, and the lowest in the scale of usefulness is the work of the fourth class, more particularly, their work of trade and commerce.[6] It is interesting that in this low estimate that the writers attach to commerce, they follow their Kianian and Achaemenian ancestors, who, as we have seen, looked with disfavour upon trade. The three first professions have for their patron fires, the great fires Froba, Goshasp, and Burzin Mihr, respectively.[7] The artisan

[1] Mkh. 59; Sg. 1. 17; Dk, vol. 1, pp. 19, 20; vol. 5, p. 293; vol. 8, p. 479.
[2] Sg. 1. 20-24; Dk., vol. 1, p. 37; vol. 9, p. 606.
[3] Sg. 1. 25-29.
[4] Dk, vol. 2, pp. 72, 73.
[5] Dk., vol. 9, p. 559.
[6] Dk., vol. 2, p. 73.
[7] Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 293, p 11

group is thus left without the help of a fire, which it could claim as especially sacred to its class. In enumerating the four classes and describing their respective duties, Tansar substitutes for the third, or agricultural, class, that of the scribes, among whom he includes the writers who prepare ecclesiastical, political, legal, and sundry documents, as well as physicians, poets, and astrologers.[8]

Members of all classes were eligible to higher posts, with the exception of bastards, who were never appointed to responsible positions.[9] There were, however, certain privileged families of nobles who had hereditary tenure of some of the most important offices in the empire.[10] Among the other nobles who held high rank in society, were the *vazurgān*, or elders, *āzātān*, or grandees, and *vāshpuhrgān*, or feudal lords.[11] It was thought desirable, it seems, for all to follow the professions of their ancestors, and Tansar explains that if a man of marked talents belonged to a certain class, but was fit to perform the duties peculiar to a member of another class, his case was to be brought to the notice of the king, and on examination of his case by the priests, he was to be allowed to embrace a profession outside his group.[12]

[8] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA, 1894, I, pp. 517, 518.
[9] Dd 78. 12.
[10] Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr Nariman, in JIA 8 55-60
[11] KrNArtP. 10 6.
[12] Darmesteter, *op cit*, p. 519.

## CHAPTER XLV

## THE FAMILY

**Parents and children.** The social unit was the family, as it was in early Iran, and kinship continued to be reckoned through the father. With pious zeal the head of the family observed the cult of the ancestral dead, and zealously guarded the fire of the family hearth, as his ancestors had done before him. A numerous family was still the ardent prayer of the faithful.[1] Barrenness brought a woman into disfavour, and exposed her to taunts and reproaches in her husband's house. Children, on the other hand, brought a wife the love and regard of all her husband's family.

Among the precepts for the care and rearing of children, the following are notable: A child, it is said, should be nourished on milk until its second or third year, and should be fondled until its seventh year.[2] It was the duty of the parents to instruct their children after their seventh year,[3] and to acquaint them with their duty in the world, before they reached the age of fifteen.[4] The good deeds done by children, when they come of age, bring credit to their parents, who share in the merit of the noble deeds of their children.[5] On the other hand, if the parents have neglected the duty of inculcating good habits in their children, and the latter commit wicked deeds, the parents are responsible for the misconduct of their children.[6] It is the duty of the children to be respectful and grateful to their parents for all they have done for them.[7] In the lifetime of their parents, the children, it is said, behave with the courage of a lion, but after their death, they become as weak as a widowed woman.[8]

[1] Dk., vol. 9, pp. 634, 637, 639.
[2] Dk., vol. 4, p. 263.
[3] *Ib.*
[4] Gs. 143.
[5] SIS. 10 22; 12 14. Sd. 18 3. Gs. 143.
[6] Sd. 51. 1-5, Gs. 143.
[7] Dk., vol. 4, p. 263; vol. 6, p. 404.
[8] AnAtM. 89.

Ungrateful children that harass their parents, have retribution meted out to them in the next world,[9] and people were enjoined not to have any dealings with children, who were wanting in their filial duty.[10] Persons who have displeased their parents reap no reward in heaven for good works done upon earth.[11] A man who had no progeny was without name and fame in this world.[12] Sons were valued more than daughters as before,[13] and one who was not blessed with a son suffered in the next world.

**Adoption.** The institution of adoption, we have noted, existed among the Kianian people. It continued to flourish among the Sasanians, and, with some modifications, flourishes among their descendants to the present day. The act of obtaining a son by adoption, in absence of a natural male issue, was, in the main, religious. The chief object was to ensure the continuation of family worship. This religious aspect is emphasised very strongly, and the author of a later, widely popular work, the Sad Dar, goes to the extravagant length of declaring an individual's salvation impossible, if he left the world without a natural or an adopted son. The author attempts a fantastic interpretation of the words *puhar*, 'son,' and *puhal*, 'bridge,' which are written alike in the Pahlavi language. It is alleged that the word for a son signifies a bridge, hence a son is the bridge, by which alone, it is possible to enter the next world.[14] A man without a son, we are further enlightened, is called a man without a bridge, and is unable to bridge the gulf between the two worlds.[15] No matter how righteous a man might have been in this world, if he has no son of his blood, and if he has failed to obtain one by adoption, his soul is detained at the Bridge of Judgment, and the heavenly judges decline to make a reckoning of his deeds. Lamenting lingers the soul at the earthly end of the Bridge of Judgment, just like a man in a wilderness infested with wild animals, who sees his home town before him, but is unable to reach the place of safety, because the bridge across

[9] AV. 65.
[10] AnAtM. 93.
[11] Sd. 40. 1-3.
[12] *Andarzihā-i Peshinikān*, tr Dhabhar, in *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume*, p. 74, Bombay, 1914.
[13] SIS. 12. 14.
[14] Sd. 18 4.
[15] Sd. 18. 5.

the river, which intervenes between him and the town, is broken.[16] Therefore it is declared essential for a man, whom providence has not favoured with a male issue, to adopt one in his lifetime. The merit of good deeds performed by an adopted son, accrues to him.[17] When a man passes away without leaving a natural or adopted son, it is declared to be the duty of the priests and relations to name an adopted son for him to save his soul from the tortures of hell.[18] If these persons failed in their duty towards the dead person, they would have to undergo heavy penalties, when their time to wend their way heavenward would come.[19] The act of arranging the adoption of a son for a dead person, is declared equivalent to bringing the dead person to life once more.[20] If a man had a son by his serving wife, that is, the wife who was a widow when she married the man, such male child was eligible for adoption; but if it was a daughter, she was unfit for the purpose, and the man had to find a boy for adoption among his relatives.[21] It is declared to be a work of great merit to obtain an adopted son for one in need of him, and a sin for him who destroyed such an arrangement.[22]

[16] Sd 18. 6-9
[17] Sd. 18. 12.
[18] Sd. 18. 13.
[19] Sd. 18. 14-18
[20] Sd. 18 19.
[21] Cf. SIS. 12. 14, Sd. 54. 1-3.
[22] Mkh 36 8; 37. 13.

## CHAPTER XLVI

## WOMAN AND MARRIAGE

**Woman.** An ideal woman, it is said, is the one who is of good nature, respectable, virtuous, helpful;[1] and an ornament to her husband and his household.[2] Woman, in Sasanian Iran, owned property, officiated in minor ceremonies, and acted as a guardian of the family, when no male member was living to guard its interests. She could aspire to the throne in absence of male successors of a king; as we find two queens successively raised to the throne in the last days of the empire. We have instances of the female members of the royal family engaging in manly sports. Thus Shirin, the beautiful wife of Khusru Parviz, is reported by Nizami to have played polo.[3] The Pahlavi writers of the period, however, do not seem to hold woman in as high esteem as did the writers of the Kianian period Woman, it is alleged, has no wisdom, and a later Pazand text depicts a man as thanking his creator, that he had made him a man and not a woman.[4] Adarbad Mahraspand advises his son not to impart his secret to woman,[5] and the Dinkard upholds the advice.[6] She is not to be accepted, says another late work, as a witness in the courts of law.[7] Her first and last duty, it is said, is to obey her husband, and the Pahlavi writers, who are of course all of the male sex, condemn her to sufferings in hell, if she was wanting in obedience to her lord.[8] Viraf pictures the soul of a woman, wending its way towards infernal regions, reminding the pious soul of her husband, that as her lord upon earth, it was his duty to have guided her on the path of righteousness, and not to have allowed her to lapse in wickedness,

[1] Mkh. 14. 12; 61 7.
[2] Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 93, pp 7, 8.
[3] See Sykes, *A History of Persia*, 1. 508, London, 1915
[4] *Andarzihā-i Peshinikān*, tr. Dhabhar, in *Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa Jubilee Volume*, pp. 73, 74, n 6.
[5] AnAtM. 14.
[6] Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. B. 48, p. 50.
[7] Mkh. 39 37
[8] Dk., vol. 5, p. 272; Gs. 76; AV. 13; 26; 70; 82.

so that now, after death, she could have accompanied him to heaven, instead of going to hell.[9] A post-Sasanian work, long held in very great esteem, has it, that though it is the duty of man to pray three times a day, the prayer proper for a woman is that during three watches of a day, she should approach her husband with folded hands, and seek to know his will, that she may carry it out obediently.[10] To liken a man to a woman, or to attribute to him a woman's work, was tantamount to accusing him of cowardice. King Hormazd IV grows jealous of his victorious general Bahram, and on pretext of a small defeat that the general once suffered, he sent him a distaff, some cotton, and a set of women's garments.[11]

The menses, which were believed to have been caused by Ahriman, had, as we have noticed in earlier pages, made woman's position inferior to man. Her profane touch was a pollution, and her impure look was a desecration to all that came near her during her periods. This view stiffened with the passing of time, and woman, consequently, suffered, in comparison to man in respect to her status in life.

**Marriage.** Fertility among sentient beings, we have seen, strengthens the Kingdom of Ormazd, and sterility is the curse of Ahriman. Marriage, therefore, was incumbent upon every man and woman in Sasanian society, as it was also in the Kianian.[12] The Sasanian legislators looked with great disfavour upon the Christians who lived in their country, because their faith imposed the celibacy upon their priests. Parents generally arranged the marriages of their children, when they attained maturity; often with the help of professional agents of good repute.[13]

In their choice of mates for one another, the ideal union was held to be the one which was contracted between an intelligent, learned man, and a young, prudent, and modest woman.[14] Just as a rich soil, in which seeds are sown, produces good fruits, so, it is said, will such unions between husbands of learning and wives of respectable families, bring forth children who will de-

[9] AV. 68.
[10] Sd. 59. 1-5.
[11] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 469, 470.
[12] Mkh. 29 4, Dk., vol. 9, pp. 609, 634; Gs. 121, 155.
[13] AnAtM. 43.
[14] *Ib* 50, 54, 111.

light to follow the path of rectitude.[15] A girl, it is said, should choose a husband who is of good disposition, healthy, and wise, and should not object if he is poor.[16]

A solitary passage suggests that, as far as possible, one should not contemplate a second marriage, after the death of his or her first partner.[17] In the late Persian Rivayat literature, which often gives expression to the thoughts and beliefs in vogue in the earlier centuries, in addition to those prevailing in their own days, we are informed that a widow without children might, if she liked, remarry four months and ten days after the death of her husband. If she had an infant whom she suckled, she should take another husband, when eighteen months had passed since the death of her first husband. But if the widow was of so advanced an age as to allow her no hope of begetting children, it was desirable that she should not remarry.[18] Similarly, the wife of a man who has forsaken the faith of Zoroastrianism, is asked to wait for a period of one year, to allow him time to repent for his error and come back to the fold. If he did not repent, the woman was at liberty to remarry.[19] It is further added that it would be sinful for a young widow to stubbornly refuse to remarry, when someone came forward to take her to wife.[20]

Marriage, it seems, could be dissolved on valid grounds. The husband could divorce his wife for unfaithfulness, and the wife could divorce the husband for desertion and ill-treatment. If a husband intrigued to seek severance of nuptial bond, when his wife was innocent of wrong-doing, the wife was at liberty to seek redress in a court of law. If the judge found the husband guilty, he could consign him to prison, but if the husband repented, and offered to take back his wife, he was to be set free.[21] Though the wife had the corresponding power to divorce her husband, she generally condoned his lapses into immorality and negligence, except under circumstances that forced her to seek protection of the court.

[15] Dk., vol. 5, pp. 314, 315; AnAtM. 50, 90.
[16] *Ib.* 55, 56.
[17] Dk., vol. 9, pp. 637, 638.
[18] *Rivâyat-i Darab Hormuzdiar,* tr Mehrji Rana, p. 369, Navsari, 1896.
[19] *Ib.*, p. 368.
[20] *Ib*, p. 370.
[21] Dk., vol. 9, p. 639.

In case of the barrenness of the wife, the Rivayat states, that the husband should continue to support her, and may take a second wife to secure a male succession, provided he continued to support the first wife also.[22] But the wife was denied the right to give up her husband and marry another, in the case of her husband losing his manly power.[23]

**Forms of marriage.** Five different kinds of marriages are mentioned in the Pahlavi texts, and women entering into matrimonial relations under different forms of marriage were known by distinctive names. A maiden who was given in marriage by her parents, was called a *pādshāh zan*, 'privileged wife.' The second form of marriage, called the *evak zan*, 'one wife,' was the case of a maiden who was the only child of her parents. When she was given in marriage to a young man, it was stipulated that the first child born to her should be taken by her parents. The third type of marriage was known as that of the *satar zan*, 'adopted wife.' When an unmarried man over fifteen years of age died, his relatives dowered a maiden and had her married to a youth. In consideration of the dowry given by the relatives of the dead man, the woman, so far as it pertained to the life of her soul after her death, was reckoned as the wife of the dead man, for the merit of whose soul, his relatives had helped her to contract her marriage. Half the number of the children that were born to this woman by her husband, belonged to the dead man, and half to the husband. When a childless widow remarried, she was termed a *chakar zan*, 'serving wife.' Half of the children born to her by her second husband belonged to her first husband in the other world. Although after her remarriage, a woman would be known in this world after the name of her second husband, in matters pertaining to the world beyond, she continued to be known after the name of her first husband. Ceremonies performed at her death for the peace of her soul, would be associated with the name of her first husband. A maiden who married in violation of the wishes of her parents was called a *khud sarāi zan*, 'self-disposing wife.'[24]

[22] *Rivāyat, op. cit.*, p. 373.
[23] *Ib.*, p. 372.
[24] See West, in SBE 5, pp 142, 143, n. 10; Anklesaria, *Forms of marriage among the Ancient Zoroastrians*, in *The Report of the Third Zoroastrian Conference*, pp. 209-234, Bombay, 1913.

**A wedding ceremony.** Marriage being a divine ordinance, its celebration was always accompanied by religious rites. The ceremony closed with the formal priestly benediction and words of counsel addressed to the couple. The Pahlavi text of the form of marriage contract has reached us.[25] One representative of the bridegroom and the father or a guardian of the bride attested to the formal contract. The parents of the bridegroom promised to pay 3000 silver coins to the bride's parents as the bride price. The Pazand wedding hymn, recited at the present day, mentions 2000 silver coins and two gold coins of the mint of Nishapur, as the amount with which the bride was to be dowered. The bride, according to the Pahlavi text, promises lifelong devotion to her husband and a faithful observance of womanly virtues, and the bridegroom, on his part, undertakes to provide for her and to make her happy.

**Mixed marriages looked upon as detrimental to social solidarity.** There were social and religious barriers raised against the intermarriage of a Zoroastrian with a non-Zoroastrian. The Dinkard condemns such unions in strong terms.[26] The barriers, however, do not seem to have been impregnable, for the kings and for men of upper classes. King Yazdagard I, Noshirvan, Bahram Gur wedded non-Zoroastrian women.[27] Shahpur III gave his sister in marriage to the Christian king of Armenia.[28] The family of the Persian general Shahrbarz was united with the royal family of Heraclius by marriage ties.[29]

[25] Jamasp Asana, *The Pahlavi Texts*, pp. 141-143, intrd. by Anklesaria, pp 47-49, Bombay, 1913.
[26] Dk, vol. 2, pp. 97-102
[27] Shatroihā-i Airān, 47, 53; Rawlinson, *op cit*, pp 451, 452, 459, 497, 498
[28] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 259.
[29] *Ib.*, pp. 541, 542.

# CHAPTER XLVII

## EDUCATION

**The value of education.** The Sasanians held the education of the youth of their country as their chief duty, and the writers of the period plead for it in most emphatic words. Education, we are informed, moulds man's character, it makes him noble,[1] it is a light-giving eye of man,[2] nay, it is the very life of man.[3] In the time of prosperity, it is said, education adds lustre to a man's name, and proves to be his saviour in the days of his adversity.[4] The second best good for man, after nature's gift of innate intelligence, is instruction.[5] No one possesses a superfluity of knowledge, a man cannot be deprived of his learning, and the precious gifts of understanding and intellect cannot be bought for a price.[6] Wisdom, it is said, is better than wealth, and a poor man who is learned is more beloved of the heavenly beings than a rich man who is ignorant.[7] It is the duty of all to impart learning to the ignorant.[8] Man should acquire learning, so that he may be able to earn an independent living for himself.[9] It is the duty of parents to give education to their children.[10]

**Preceptors and their disciples.** The teachers were known as *frāhangikān* and *andarzpatān*.[11] The profession of the teacher was held in high esteem. He was the person who shaped the character of the youth,[12] and consequently was the real benefactor of the country.[13] His responsibilities were con-

[1] Gs. 35.
[2] AnAtM. 58.
[3] Dk, vol 12, bk 6 316, p 28.
[4] Gs 147.
[5] Dk, vol 3, p 134.
[6] Mkh. 40. 6-8, 19-21
[7] Mkh. 47. 6; 58. 7.
[8] SIS. 20. 6, 7.
[9] Dk., vol. 9, pp. 585, 586
[10] Sd. 51 1-6; Gs 143; AnAtM. 56, 58
[11] Sg. 1. 40
[12] Dk, vol 6, p. 404.
[13] Dk., vol. 3, p. 134

sidered equally great. He was himself to be the embodiment of virtue, and was to embellish his own nature in a manner, as to make it transparent like a mirror, so that his disciples could see his good actions reflected in it, and could emulate them. If the teacher himself failed to live according to his precepts, his life would be a blank, and his pupils could not find in him a source of inspiration.[14] It is the duty of the pupils to be always grateful to their preceptors,[15] and to endeavour to emulate their examples.[16]

**The teaching.** Religious knowledge formed an indispensable part of the system of education, and secular training occupied a secondary place. The school was generally situated on the premises of the fire-temples in towns and villages. The sons of the king and of other members of the royal family were educated at the school attached to the palace. Sons of the feudal chiefs and provincial satraps often lived at the royal palace, and were instructed along with the princes in the *frāhangistān* or the college, in reading, writing, horsemanship, and other arts.[17] The art of warfare, the game of polo, and archery may be mentioned as other subjects in which instruction was imparted to the princes.[18] Higher instruction was imparted to those, who aspired to administrative positions in the country. Men whose ambition it was to achieve glory on the battlefield, acquired training in the art of warfare. Higher studies in literature, medicine, philosophy, and kindred subjects were carried on in the celebrated academy of Noshirvan at Jund-i Shapur, to which scholars came from different parts of the world, in search of knowledge.

Seekers after knowledge are advised to spend one third part of the day and night in study.[19] Young scholars are asked to rise before sunrise for their studies, and are advised to do their work most attentively at the school.[20]

[14] Dk., vol. 11, bk. 6. 223, 224, p. 84.
[15] Dk., vol. 6, p. 404.
[16] Dk., vol 5, p. 283.
[17] KrNArtP. 1. 23, 25, 39; cf. Unvala, *The Pahlavi text King Husrav and his boy*, 8-12
[18] ShN. 6 329, 379, 380.
[19] Gs. 126.
[20] *Andarz-i Kotakān*, tr Freiman, in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, pp. 488, 489, Bombay, 1918.

# CHAPTER XLVIII

## KINGSHIP

**The titles of the king.** Like his royal predecessors of the Achaemenian dynasty, the Sasanian king was always known as the King of Kings of Iran and non-Iran. He was Ormazd's vicegerent upon earth,[1] upon whom the divine Kingly Glory had descended.[2] When Artakhshir, the founder of the Sasanian Empire was pursued by the last of the Parthian kings, this Glory came to him in the form of an eagle, and the hero, we read, was enabled by its majesty to defeat Artaban and to establish once again the Zoroastrian rule in Persia.[3] This divine grace which made the king, the elect of Ormazd, and exalted him as the highest among mortals, later came to be regarded as inherent in the person of the king, who now proclaimed himself, the descendant of divinity, or divinity in flesh.[4] This tendency on the part of Sasanian kings to arrogate to themselves the divine titles increased as time passed. King Shapur styled himself 'companion of the stars,' 'brother of the sun and the moon;'[5] and Khusru Parviz proclaimed himself 'the immortal man among gods' and 'the most illustrious god among men'[6]

The founder of the Sasanian Empire came from a priestly family. The Sasanians were the firm believers in the union of the Church and the State Religion, we are told, attains to greatness through the State, and the State acquires eminence by its union with religion, and the interests of both are interwoven.[7] King Artakhshir is reported to have said in his admonitions to his son, that the Church and the State are like brother and sister, none of whom can flourish without the other, and that they are both interwoven together like two pieces of

[1] Dk., vol. 7, pp. 426, 440
[2] Dk., vol. 9, p. 599.
[3] KrNArtP. 3. 10-20.
[4] Hj. Inscr. 1-4.
[5] Rawlinson, *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp 171, 244.
[6] Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr. Nariman, in JIA 8. 431.
[7] Dk., vol. 1, pp. 54, 55.

brocade.[8] The Church remained indissolubly joined together with the State, and the sovereign was regarded as the Defender of the Faith, who united the positions of king and priest in his own person.[9]

**The law of succession.** The office of the king was hereditary. As a rule, the eldest son succeeded his father, but the legitimate claim of the heir apparent was occasionally set aside by the king in favour of a younger son, who happened to be his favourite, or of a prince born to him by his best beloved wife, who persuaded him to designate her offspring for the throne. Under such circumstances, the king informed his minister of his wish, or executed a formal testament, as Kobad did before his death.[10] In some cases, the king mentioned the name of his successor in a letter, and without informing his sons or ministers about his decision regarding his successor, sealed the document and deposited it in the royal treasury. On the death of the king, the royal letter was opened in the assembly of the princes and nobles. The prince on whom the royal choice had fallen, and who was mentioned by his royal father as his successor, was then raised to the throne, and his other brothers were appointed governors of the provinces. The brothers thus removed from the Court, we are informed, very seldom met again.[11] The High Priest, aided by other dignitaries, crowned a new king, when he came to the throne, and showered benedictions upon him.[12] With the growth of the power of the Church, the voice of the priests became more influential in the appointment of a king. According to the statement of Tansar, the ruling king was required to write with his own handwriting three messages in which he expressed his wishes regarding his successor, and entrusted them to a reliable custodian. The messages were for the High Priest, the Grand Vizier, and the Commander-in-chief. On the passing away of the king, the three dignitaries were to meet together to discuss the situation. If there was an unanimous agreement between them, they were to make the announcement, but if the High Priest was of another opinion, the con-

[8] ShN. 6. 286; Masudi, tr. Barbier de Meynard, 2 162.
[9] Dk., vol. 9, p 575.
[10] ShN. 7. 210.
[11] Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 248, Bombay, 1908; ShN. 7 210, 211.
[12] ShN. 6. 409.

ference was to close. The High Priest had then to summon a synod of priests, consult them and invoke Ormazd and his heavenly ministers by supplications for guidance. The nobles and courtiers were then to meet together, and the High Priest was to announce the name of the prince as the rightful successor to the throne, and the assembly was to receive his announcement as inspired by Ormazd. Then the High Priest solemnly said, 'the heavenly beings have decreed that N or M shall be king. Acknowledge, therefore, O people, him as your king, and you will be happy.' The chosen prince was then to be seated on a throne, and a crown to be placed on his head. On being sworn by the High Priest in the name of God, and the religion of Zoroaster, the new king responded, 'as is the will of God, I will work for the welfare of the people.'[13] The accession of a new king to the throne did not, however, always come out in a peaceful manner. Several claimants often came out with their followers and fought for the throne, which ultimately fell to him, who, with force of arms, asserted his right by defeating and destroying his rivals. When a minor prince was raised to the throne, a council of state or a regent managed the affairs, until the prince came of age and took the reins of his empire in his hands.[14] Generally, it was the male issues of a king that occupied the throne, but, failing these, there were no restrictions to raising the females to the throne, and we find two princesses who successively occupied the throne. When a person of royal blood was not found, the Dinkard states, that the nobility of the country should, without personal predilections, proceed to choose a person of noble birth, good repute, and upright behaviour.[15] The occupant of the throne was required to be without glaring bodily disfigurements. A prince who was blinded by his rival claimant to the throne, lost his title to it.[16]

**The power of the king.** The occupant of the throne who, as we have seen, styled himself a god among men was absolute in power. He held in the hollow of his hands the life and property of every one of his subjects. He endowed, at his will, the nobles and chiefs with distinctions and wealth. He could,

[13] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, I pp. 544, 545.
[14] Cf ShN. 6. 329, 360.
[15] Dk., vol. 9, p. 608.
[16] Christensen, *op. cit.* 8. 431.

as well, deprive one of his life and property at his caprice. Though the will of the sovereign was supreme, there were, however, other forces in existence, which often acted as a check to the unlimited power of the king. The Mobad hierarchy, which rose to great power and influence in Sasanian Iran, had a strong hold over the people, and could easily stir up a revolt against a king, whom they disliked. Thus, though in theory, the king was absolute in power, he could not, in practice, show a total disregard for the established usages and institutions. The belief that the king was the representative of God upon earth, did not, however, restrain the people from revolting against the royal authority, when the king's actions did not savour of divine inspiration, and when iniquity and oppressiveness signalized his rule. We have, consequently, examples in which tyrant kings have been compelled by the powerful hierarchy and the hereditary nobility to change their policy for the welfare of the people. Similarly, unpopular princes were often prevented from coming to the throne, or, in extreme cases, people rose in insurrection and deposed, or incapacitated, or killed their rulers. It is stated that a king who is weak or indifferent to the welfare of the people, or is incapable of averting threatened danger to his country, and cannot keep it free from trouble, is to be replaced by a better one, even by fighting with him, if necessary.[17]

**The ethics of kings.** Though the divine right of the king to rule over men as the representative of Ormazd was never contested, we learn from the extant writings on the duties of kings, that the king was expected to conduct himself in a manner worthy of his exalted position. Just as a stream of water, it is said, flowing from the top of a mountain, spreads a carpet of verdure on the plains below, or as a fire lighted on the hill sheds its brilliant light all around, so should a good king be a fruitful source of goodness for his subjects. He should, in the first place, be religious, and possessed of good disposition, he should practise forbearance, love his subjects, and strive for their welfare, he should bear in mind the transitoriness of all earthly power, choose wise and noble courtiers, appreciate the merit of the worthy, sit in open court and render justice to those who are wronged, and punish the wrong-doers, be generous like water,

[17] Mkh. 33. 10; Dk., vol. 2, p. 115.

be not covetous, and obey the will of God.[18] The sovereign should be merciful in his dealings with the subjects,[19] should become a shield to his people against all danger,[20] be pious and devoted to his heavenly lord,[21] combine in his person the grandeur of power, with the majesty of religion,[22] and work for the exaltation of the national faith.[23] If the king is religious, he makes his people so, his indifference to religion turns them to irreligion.[24] If he is righteous, he benefits all, if he leans toward wickedness, harm accrues to all.[25] The people profit or lose in both the worlds, according to the king's desire for good or for evil.[26] As the true overseer of the conduct of his people, the king should prevent them from indulging in sin.[27] The goodness on the part of the king makes him fit for the company of God's angels, but the bad king is an associate of the demons.[28] A virtuous king is always inspired by the Good Spirit to work for the good of his people.[29] He should lovingly conduct the affairs of his people, even as a good woman manages her household.[30] The sovereign should confide in the wisdom of his High Priest, and should not act in important matters without his advice.[31] The king should, with the constant help of his High Priest, strive to keep the flame of the excellent faith of the prophet aglow in the world.[32] It is advantageous for the king to hold frequent conversations with the wise and the good,[33] as happiness or misery, greatness or ruin of his subjects rest with him.[34] He should keep away from him the unwise, and always act after due deliberation.[35] Like wind and clouds, heavy with fertilizing waters, the king should work for the prosperity and happiness

[18] Dk., vol. 3, pp. 180-183; vol. 7, pp. 456, 457
[19] Dk., vol. 3, p. 184.
[20] Dk., vol. 5, p. 281.
[21] Dk., vol. 6, pp. 412, 413.
[22] Dk., vol. 3, p. 175.
[23] Dk., vol. 5, p. 342.
[24] Dk., vol. 4, pp. 216, 217.
[25] Dk., vol. 4, p. 194.
[26] Dk., vol. 4, p. 205.
[27] Dk., vol. 3, p 134.
[28] Mkh. 15, 26, 39.
[29] Dk, vol. 9, p. 561.
[30] Dk., vol. 6, p. 385.
[31] Dk., vol. 6, pp 422, 423, vol 10, bk 6. 30, p. 9
[32] Dk., vol. 8, p. 439.
[33] Mkh. 20. 4.
[34] Dk., vol. 7, p. 466.
[35] Dk., vol. 9, p. 607.

of his people.[36] He should patronize learning and relieve the learned from the anxiety of earning their livelihood, so that they may devote their time in pursuit of knowledge, and should help those that are deserving and needy.[37] He should assuage the sufferings of his subjects, should treat them as his own children, should work to make them exalted, and should render his country renowned and great.[38] Goodness shown by the king to the people under his sway, makes him the favoured of God.[39] The king should fight against a coming danger, ever hopeful of success, should not be despondent, and should not dread evil, for, that would make him miserable.[40] He should be possessed of foresight and confidence, and should never be cowardly.[41] On the other hand, it is the bounden duty of the people to obey the will of the king.[42] They should be grateful to him in thought, word, and deed, for the protection and security he gives them.[43] The king is the giver of law and order unto the people, an embellishment on festive occasions, the refuge and asylum of the subject in times of fear.[44] People should address the king after mature consideration.[45] Even a good action done by a subject in opposition to the royal will, loses its merit.[46] Good-will should always prevail between the king and his subjects.[47]

**The royal court.** According to Masudi, a register was kept in which were recorded the graded ranks of the courtiers, with their descriptions, titles, rights, and functions.[48] Among the chief functionaries, who shared the responsibility with the king of managing the affairs of the kingdom, were, according to the same author, *Mobadān Mobad,* 'the High Priest;' *Vazurg Farmātār,* 'the Grand Vizier,' who bore the Achaemenian title *Hazārpat; Artcshtārān Sālār* or *Irān Sipāhpat,* the Commander-in-chief;' *Dapirān Mahist* or *Iran Dapirpat,* 'the Secretary of State;' and *Vāstryosān Sālār or Vāstryosānpat,* 'the Minister of

[36] Dk., vol. 7, p. 468
[37] Dk., vol. 9, pp 608, 609.
[38] Dk, vol. 7, pp. 430, 431.
[39] Dk, vol. 7, p 490.
[40] Dk, vol 8, p 468
[41] Dk., vol 8, pp 481-483.
[42] Dk., vol 1, p. 9
[43] Dk, vol 6, pp. 404, 418, 419; vol. 9, p. 559
[44] Darmesteter, *op. cit*, p 528.
[45] Dk, vol 9, pp 600, 601.
[46] Dk., vol. 11, bk 6. 232, 233, pp. 88, 89
[47] Dk., vol. 5, p. 283
[48] See Christensen *op cit* 9 33.

Agriculture;' who often controlled commerce, labour and similar departments, and was then called *Hutokhshpat*.[49] Members of the great privileged families were generally selected to hold the offices of great trust.[50] Most of the kings of this period took a keen personal interest in public affairs of the empire at home, and in the matter of its relations with foreign powers. Some of them, occasionally, presided over the law courts and passed judgments on culprits. On more important occasions of embarking upon war with a hostile power, the king consulted the satraps and vassal kings, in addition to his courtiers and commanders.

The splendour and pomp exhibited by the Sasanian Court was not equalled by any royal court of the time. Punctillious attention was paid to the observation of minute forms of court etiquette. All movements in the court were regulated by strict ceremony, and the master of ceremonies was responsible for their careful observance On great occasions, when the king was to grace the hall of audience with his presence, the nobles and courtiers came attired in rich robes of honour, and the military chiefs in their full costumes, arranged themselves most carefully in the strict order of their rank. On the announcement, by the chamberlain, of the approach of the king, all stood with bent heads and lowered hands amid stony silence, interrupted only by the majestic steps of the sovereign, dressed in the most magnificent robe, studded with the richest jewels. When the king had seated himself on the throne, with the crown on the head and the sceptre in the hand,[51] amid great solemnity of demeanour, and the features expressive of royal power, the officers of state sat in their respective places, from ten to thirty feet distance from the king. A rich curtain screened the august face of the king from all. When any of the courtiers had to approach the king, or when the king summoned any one to his presence, the master of ceremonies drew the curtain, and ushered him into the royal presence. On approaching near the august sovereign, the individual threw himself at the feet of the throne, and kissed the earth. The king then commanded him to rise to his feet. The suppliant stood in his place, took out a clean white handkerchief from his sleeve, and held it before his mouth to prevent his breath profaning the royal surroundings even from

[49] *Ib.*, 8. 76-78, 85. [50] *Ib.* 8. 355. [51] ShN. 6. 258.

a distance.[52] He then addressed the king in all humility, and received the command, which the sovereign was pleased to give, and, making a low bow, retired from the royal presence with backward steps. The signs of humility and reverence thus exhibited in the presence of the king, were to a considerable extent to be observed, according to the Shah Namah, even when, far from the royal gaze, outside the palace or the city, one received a message or any other object in the name of the king. For example, if a royal messenger came to a satrap or a courtier or a general or any of the subject, with a royal edict; the receiver, however exalted his position, had to dismount from his horse, if he was riding, or rise from his seat, if he happened to sit, on the approach of the royal messenger, was to receive the document reverentially, raise it to his lips, or press it to his eyes, or put it on his head, before reading it.

Meritorious services on the part of the courtiers were lavishly awarded by the king. Titles and personal distinctions, robes of honour and choicest gifts fell to the lot of those, who were so fortunate as to receive some mark of the royal bounty.[53]

When the envoys of a foreign country came to Persia on an important mission, the king received them in audience, with the honour due to their position, and, if the affairs required that the embassy should stay for some days in Persia, the king lodged the envoys in comfortable apartments, lavishly entertained them at banquet, chase, and sports, and on the occasion of their departure presented each member of the embassy with a robe of honour.[54]

**The king in public.** Though access to the king in time of peace was the privilege of very few, the outbreak of a war enabled the people of the towns and villages to see the king at close quarters, for, as a general rule, as we shall see later, the king led his armies in person against the enemy, leaving his son, or brother, or chief minister, in charge of the affairs at home.

Similarly, while making his triumphant entry into his capital, after securing a victory in the war, or on other state occasions, the king allowed himself to be seen by his subjects in his imperial state, and his majestic light shone upon them. People thronged in their festive attire on the streets, which were gayly

[52] Christensen, *op. cit.* 9. 34. [54] ShN. 7. 339-343.
[53] *Ib.* 9. 36, 37.

decorated with triumphal arches, flags, streamers, and buntings. Arrayed in the costliest attire, amid pompous display, the king rode on a splendidly caparisoned horse, followed by the princes, nobles, and warriors on horses, decked with beautiful saddles and rich trappings, making the trumpet of victory sound throughout the land, amid the pealing of bells, the shout of welcome from the multitude, and similar tokens of rejoicing, which the gaiety of the event occasioned. On the New Year's Day, as on other festive occasions, the king gave a great banquet, at which the common people, as well as the nobles, were invited.[55]

**The king in private life.** The king lived in magnificent palaces, surrounded by luxuriant gardens and beautiful avenues, intersected by paved walks shaded by tall trees, beds of flowers, charming promenades, murmuring fountains making melodious music, arbours, hanging gardens, and summer houses. Palaces were built in different parts of the empire, and the royal household shifted its residence to escape the heat of summer and cold of winter, according to the seasonal changes We are informed that the annual royal exodus from the capital began every year in April or May, and that in November the Court returned to the capital.[56]

The superintendents of the royal household and cuisine, chamberlain, musicians, guards, pages, and slaves contributed to the comfort of their royal master.

The royal table was loaded with sumptuous meals, served in dishes of gold.

Court musicians contributed to the amusement of the king within the walls of the palace, where he generally beguiled an idle hour by playing chess, Vin-i Artakhshir, and similar skillful games. Among the more manly sports were hunting and fishing, and playing the game of polo.

The king, who was accustomed to receive homage of all human beings around him, recognized that, though he was the highest of mortals and swayed his sceptre above the earth, there was a power still higher and greater than he, through whose grace he ruled. With all humility, he fell prostrate on his face before his creator,[57] and while engaged in prayer always set

[55] Hori, *op. cit.*, p. 250; cf. ShN 6. 389.
[56] See Hori, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
[57] KrNArtP. 10. 16.

aside his royal insignia, and donned a white dress. On his return from the battlefields, he usually visited the great fire-temples, and showered rich gifts upon their custodians.

A king's death was mourned for forty days by his loyal subjects.[58]

**The royal harem.** The Sasanian monarchs, like their Achaemenian predecessors, maintained large seraglios. The women who filled the harem came from all grades of Iranian people. We have already seen how some of the great kings had espoused the daughters of the kings of alien races, to consolidate the friendly ties binding their empire to others.

Generally, one wife of the royal blood occupied the supreme position, and was held to be the chief consort. She was the legal wife, whose children were the legitimate successors to the throne. Occasionally, a wife or a concubine of a lower position, was elevated with the investment of royal insignia to the rank of a privileged wife.

We see from the graphic description of the chivalrous adventures of Bahram Gur in the Shah Namah, that on his hunting expeditions, whenever the sportive king gave his horse the rein in quest of game, and filled the bag with the wild asses browsing on the plains, some village lass living in an adjoining hut won his royal love, and was taken home to swell the number of his seraglio. The wives and concubines in the harem of Khusru Parviz are said to have been unusually numerous.[59]

Eunuchs and slaves performed menial services of the inmates of the harem.

[58] ShN 6. 306, 321; 7 151

[59] Rawlinson, *op cit*, p. 498

# CHAPTER XLIX

## ADMINISTRATION

**Organization of the empire.** No less than two hundred and forty *kat khudāe*, or petty feudal chiefs, are declared to have ruled over their petty states in Persia, when Artakhshir, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, appeared on the scene.[1] After wresting the sceptre from the hands of the Parthian king Artaban, who was the most powerful of these hereditary chiefs,[2] the conqueror continued to extend his dominions by conquests, and soon succeeded in bringing the numerous independent states under his one supreme control. Those of the chiefs who submitted to the new king, and bound themselves by an oath of allegiance to acknowledge the Great King as their sovereign, to pay him a fixed tribute, and to serve him with their armies in times of war, were allowed to retain their territories. These kinglets, called *shatroyār*, had to receive their crowns at the hands of the Great King, and to come to the royal court on great occasions to pay their homage to him.[3] The satrapial form of government, so noted among the Achaemenians, was introduced in the country, and the many provinces of the empire were governed by the satraps appointed by the king, and were known as *marzpan*, *patkospān*, or *ostāndārān*.[4] These provincial governors had under them officers who managed their districts, and were called *dehkān* or *shahrikān*.[5] As the empire continued to expand by new conquests, it was found inconvenient to control and supervise the doings of the numerous governors. King Noshirvan the Just, who is universally credited with having introduced far reaching reforms in the various departments of the state, therefore, reduced the several satrapies into four distinct groups, and placed at the head of each division, an efficient and trustworthy

[1] KrNArtP. 1. 1.
[2] ShN. 6. 225.
[3] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, 1. 513.
[4] See Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr. Nariman, in JIA., 8. 131, 132.
[5] *Ib* 172, 354.

viceroy. The king, consequently, had to deal with four viceroys instead of with many governors, some of whom had their seats of government very remote from the capital. The governors of the various provinces worked under the directions of the heads of the four chief governments, and the latter in turn reported from time to time to the king. Like his great Achaemenian predecessors, the king journeyed frequently through his dominions, and made personal inquiries into the condition of his subjects. A large number of detectives and spies moved from one end of the empire to another at the royal behest, and reported upon the misdoings of the ruling class, and the sufferings of the people. It was the duty of the king, says Tansar, to appoint trusted, wise, and upright men for this responsible duty. For, if intriguing persons happened to occupy this office, they would very likely fill the king's ears with calumny, and work upon the vanity or fears of the sovereign to ruin their opponents. The lives and property of the worthy and innocent not being secure, the intolerable state of affairs would soon bring about a revolution in the country, and the king would be responsible for the consequences.[6] When cases of mal-administration reached the ears of the king, he sent commissions to collect evidence and make inquiries on the spot. If these courts of inquiry reported that the guilt was proved in the case of a satrap or any official, the guilty party was severely punished.[7]

**The revenue system.** Among the many sources of income that filled the royal treasury the taxes gathered from the arable land within the empire formed the most important item. The long prevailing custom was, that the crown claimed annually from the farmer a certain proportion of the produce, which was fixed by the government officials, and, according to Mirkhond and Tabari, usually fluctuated between one-tenth and one-half of the entire produce of the estimated productiveness of the soil.[8] This system left the farmer unsafe in his position, for he had every year to look with uncertainty to the tax gatherer, who might, at his caprice, make a greater demand for the state. The cultivator, therefore, had no interest in the soil that he tilled, he had no incentive to increase his output, and introduce improvements,

[6] Darmesteter, *op. cit.*, JA., 1894, 1. pp. 532, 533; ShN. 7. 224-228.
[7] Mirkhond, *Memoires sur Diverses Antiquites de la Perse*, Silvestre de Sacy, pp. 381, 382, Paris, 1793.
[8] See Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 440, 441.

since he was not sure of reaping the fruits of his labour. He had to endure further hardships, for the cultivator could not reap the crops, when they were ready, until the king's men appeared on the field, and collected the imposts.[9] In his great scheme of administrative reforms, Noshirvan ordered a general assessment of all the land under cultivation, and introduced the system of fixed land tax. An annual survey of all land was made by the revenue officers, and a register was kept showing land lying fallow, which was exempt. In the case of the land under cultivation, the names of the cultivators, with the size of their land holdings and the nature of the crops that they grew, were noted.[10] The cultivator was henceforth informed that he had to pay a fixed sum of money and a fixed measure of the produce of his field.[11] The rate that a farmer had to pay yearly was fixed in perpetuity, and it brought him a sense of security of his holding and its income. The fruit trees, likewise, were assessed at payments, varying according to the value of each tree.[12] A graduated tax on personal property, with reference to the wealth of every individual was levied upon all males between the ages of twenty and fifty, excepting the servants of the crown. The Jews and Christians, who received protection in the empire, without fighting for it, were required to pay a poll-tax.[13] Payments of the taxes were asked for in quarterly instalments, at intervals of four months, and a notice stating the exact amount due by every individual citizen was posted in all towns and villages.[14] Precautions were taken to safeguard the people from the extortions by unscrupulous officers, by appointing the priests of all places to the task of superintending the work of the tax-gatherers.[15] Stern measures were adopted when a case of corruption in the administration of the revenues of the empire came to notice, and, we are informed, that on one occasion, when a commission of inquiry sat to investigate cases of extortion, as many as eighty collectors of taxes were sentenced to death on its findings.[16]

[9] *Ib.*, p. 441
[10] *Ib.*
[11] *Ib* ; cf. Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 249, Bombay, 1908.
[12] Rawlinson, *op cit*, p. 442
[13] *Ib.*
[14] *Ib.*, p. 443.
[15] *Ib.*, p. 443
[16] Mirkhond, *op. cit*, p 382

In times of famine and drought, attempts were made to relieve the distress of the people. For example, a terrible drought visited the country in the reign of Piroz, and lasted for seven years. The king, thereupon, remitted taxes, declined to take any revenue from the people, and opened his royal treasury, brought in grain from distant lands, distributed it among the people, and thus protected them against the dire consequences of the scourge.[17]

When Bahram Gur ascended the throne, he signalized the occasion by forgiving all arrears of taxes.[18]

**Coinage.** Both gold and silver coins were, as we have seen, in circulation among the Achaemenians. When Artakhshir established the new Zoroastrian Empire after five centuries of alien rule in Persia, Parthian coins of both the metals were current. He adopted the Parthian model, which with the later modification under Roman influence, remained the basis of Sasanian coinage. The Sasanian gold coin of the early period, weighing 136 grains, is of the Roman model.[19] The silver coins are found in vast numbers, and from the names and titles of the kings, their regnal years, and the mint-marks that they exhibit, we know exactly the time and place where they were struck. We shall consider the artistic value of the coins in subsequent pages.

**Roads and post-houses.** We had seen that the distant parts of the extensive empire were linked by trunk roads by the Achaemenians. Under the Sasanians, these were kept in constant repairs, and new roads were constructed. Bridges were thrown to span the water courses that intersected the caravan routes. Long strings of camels laden with goods and droves of loaded horses, mules and donkeys worked day and night for the dealers in merchandise. Post-houses were established at various places, and guards were stationed on the main routes to ensure the safety of the caravans and travellers. Caravansarais were erected for the shelter of weary wayfarers, and provision was made for their upkeep. The postal service of the period was modelled on the Achaemenian system, and the Arab conquerors later adopted it, along with many other institutions of the Sasanians.

[17] Rawlinson, *op cit.*; pp. 314, 315
[18] ShN. 7. 11.
[19] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p 69.

## CHAPTER L

## LAW AND JUSTICE

**The nature of Sasanian legislation.** Law in Sasanian Iran continued to be regarded as an integral part of religion. The jurists of the new empire looked to the Avesta as the fountain of law. The lost Avestan works were assiduously collected, and the sections of law found therein were codified. As law had its origin in religion, the priests, who were the depositaries of religious learning, were also the best interpreters of legal texts. Likewise, they were regarded as the proper persons to hold high judicial positions in the country. The highest ecclesiastical functionary, therefore, exercised supreme authority in jurisprudence also. King Artakhshir consulted his High Priest on how to deal with his queen, when her plot to poison her royal husband had been discovered, and the High Priest recommended her execution.[1] The ultimate judicial authority, however, was vested in the king, who was the vicegerent upon earth of the divine lawgiver Ormazd. The peaceful progress of the world, it is said, depends upon justice, and the king is enjoined to preside in person occasionally in open courts, in order to extirpate injustice from the country.[2] King Hormazd II is reported to have presided in person at such courts, to which poor people of the empire brought their complaints, when they were harassed by the rich and powerful.[3] The penalty of death or mutilations, says the Dinkard, was not to be inflicted without reference to the king's approval.[4]

**The judges.** The judges for civil, as well as criminal, justice were, as before, mostly drawn from the priestly class.[5] The Avestan term *sraoshāvarez*, which signified the ecclesiastical

[1] KrNArtP. 9. 15, 16; ShN. 6. 260.
[2] Dk., vol. 3, p. 182.
[3] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 139, 140.
[4] Dk., vol. 9, p. 632.
[5] Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 248, Bombay, 1908.

judge, is occasionally found under its Pahlavi equivalent *sroshā-varzdār*, but the most usual title now applied, to distinguish a judge, is *dātbar*, 'upholder of justice,' from which is derived the Persian word *dāvar*. Among the judges of various grades, the final decisions of the High Priest are declared to be most authoritative, owing to his righteous thoughts.[6] An impartial judge, the text says, who never gives a false judgment is loved by Ormazd.[7] A judge who does not accept a bribe is like unto Ormazd; but whoso, in his greed for money, demeans himself on the bench resembles Ahriman.[8] It is the duty of a judge always to weigh the scale evenly between the rich and the poor. To the minors who are brought for trial to the court, the judge is advised to show special consideration in dealing with their crimes.[9] A judge who is false to his responsible position, causes great harm to all,[10] and is likened unto a demon.[11] Rainfall turns out scanty, sweetness departs from the milk of cattle, and children perish at their birth, in a place having a corrupt judge in its midst.[12]

In his account of the horrible tortures alleged to be meted out to the sinners in hell, Viraf depicts the souls of corrupt judges as being suspended by one leg with their heads downward, eyes scooped out, tongues chopped off, the bodies racked with forks, heads pierced with iron spikes,[13] or, according to other instances, as slaying their own children and devouring their brains.[14] The angels make a lodging in the persons of good judges.[15] The dispensers of justice are exhorted to deliver true judgments, if they desire to be saved at the Bridge of Judgment.[16] They are admonished to keep the fear of hell in mind, while pronouncing sentences upon culprits.[17] An upright judge who happens to give wrong judgments, owing to the lack of proper legal ability, is forgiven by Ormazd.[18] The heavenly judge compensates those who are the victims of injustice in this world.[19] An ideal judge embellishes justice, but a corrupt judge impairs it.[20] It is therefore declared that careful inquiry should

[6] Dk., vol. 2, p. 69.
[7] Dk., vol. 8, p. 438.
[8] Mkh. 39. 45, 46.
[9] Dk., vol. 7, p. 440.
[10] Dk., vol. 8, p. 456.
[11] Dk., vol. 8, p. 480.
[12] SIS. 10. 18.
[13] AV. 79.
[14] AV 91
[15] Dk, vol. 9, p. 593.
[16] Dk., vol 5, p. 315; vol. 7, p. 474.
[17] AnAtM. 69
[18] Dk, vol. 7, p. 474.
[19] Dk., vol. 7, p. 473.
[20] Dk., vol. 8, p. 457.

be made regarding the character of a person, before he is appointed a judge.[21]

**Witnesses.** In deciding a case coming before him, a judge must depend upon his own legal knowledge and the evidence of witnesses.[22] It is said that the human judge is not endowed with the all-seeing power of Ormazd, and, consequently, must rely on the evidence of the witnesses of the litigant parties.[23] The administrators of justice are asked to weigh carefully the evidence that falls before them, and to discriminate between the true and false statements of the witnesses. They should believe in the testimony of a man of reputation.[24] An insincere person is not to be relied upon as a witness.[25] A Pahlavi text, written in the Mohammedan period, adds that a woman, a minor, and a slave are to be classed among others who cannot be accepted as witnesses.[26]

**The law of inheritance.** The law of testamentary succession laid down the rules, according to which a person bequeathed his property to his heirs. It was essential that a person who made a testamentary disposition should be sound in mind. If an individual made his will on his death-bed and bequeathed his property to one party, to the exclusion of other heirs, the aggrieved ones could have the testament declared null and void by a court, if it proved that the deceased was not in full possession of his mental faculties.[27] It was a crime to suppress a will.[27a] If a man died intestate, each of the sons and unmarried daughters received one share, and the widow twice as much. If any of the sons, or the widow of a son, was blind, crippled, or maimed, he or she was entitled to twice as much as one of sound body.[28] When a man died without leaving a son, the management and guardianship of the family rested with his widow. It was her duty to have her daughters married, to nurture and protect those whom the deceased husband had maintained, and to perform the ceremonies, incumbent upon the family.[29] If the dead man

[21] Dk., vol. 8, p. 451.
[22] Dk., vol. 5, p. 309.
[23] Dk., vol. 7, p. 451.
[24] Dk., vol. 6, p. 382.
[25] Dk., vol. 2, p. 69; vol. 6, p 383; vol. 9, p. 593.
[26] Mkh. 39. 37.
[27] Dd. 54. 6-8.
[27a] Dk., vol. 9, p. 631.
[28] Dd. 54. 9; 62 3, 4.
[29] Dd. 54. 10.

left sisters, whom he had supported during his lifetime, it was the duty of the widow to give them food and maintenance from the income of her late husband's property.[30]

**Adoption on civil basis.** We have noted in previous pages how the ardent desire to perpetuate the cult of the ancestral dead of the family led to the custom of adopting a son, in default of one begotten. The institution of adoption in this case had a religious basis, and the adopted son was believed able to facilitate the way to heaven of departed members of the family by ceremonies performed in their behalf. We read, also, in the Pahlavi Dadistan-i Denik of an institution of adoption, which seems to have a civil basis, with the fundamental view of safeguarding and managing the property of a deceased person, who has left no grown son to succeed him. The guardians in this case are not necessarily men only, as we shall see later, but the widow, or an unmarried daughter of the dead man, or any other of his relations. The Pahlavi word *sator,* 'adopted son,' is used to cover both methods of adopting a son, alike for religious purpose, and as a guardian for civil interests. To avoid confusion, we shall call the person, man or woman, appointed to manage the property of a dead person by the designation, family guardian.

If a man died leaving a wife and sons, his estate was to be managed by the sons, under the guidance and control of their mother. When a family was not blessed with sons, the widow acted as the guardian of the family.[31] When some of the affairs of the dead person were of such a nature that they could not be well managed by a woman, it was customary to appoint a male family guardian.[32] A son-in-law, for example, under such circumstances, could very well help the house-mistress, but he was not allowed to act without her consent. When, however, a son was born to him, who, through his mother's side, was a direct descendant of the family, the son-in-law became entitled to more intimate concern and greater power in the management of the property.[33]

If a man of ample property died leaving no wife or issue, or even a brother, it was thought necessary, for the management of his estate, to appoint a guardian from his nearest relatives.[34] Persons, considered most fitted for the purpose were, firstly, a

[30] Dd. 54. 11.
[31] Dd. 54. 9.
[32] Dd. 62. 6.
[33] Dd. 54. 12, 13.
[34] Dd. 56. 2, 3; 59. 2

grown-up sister, provided she had not undertaken similar duties elsewhere, secondly, a brother's daughter or a brother's son, and, lastly, any other near relative.[35] If a man was survived only by a serving wife, or a daughter, or an infant son, who could not manage the family affairs, the father of the widow was held to be the proper person to act as guardian; if not he, a brother or sister, or some other near relative, was to be chosen for the post.[36] It was held to be unlawful not to appoint such guardians, as soon as possible, or, within a year, at the latest, after the death of the head of a family.[37]

The texts mention three kinds of such guardianship. In the first place, as we have seen, the widow or an unmarried daughter was regarded as the natural guardian of the family, after the death of the father. Secondly, a guardian who had been appointed by the head of the family, in his own lifetime, was held to be qualified to conduct his affairs after his death. The guardianship of the third kind came in force when the widow of the dead person, or his daughter, was not in a position to become a guardian, as well as when the deceased had appointed no one during his lifetime. Under these circumstances, it was the duty of the High Priest to appoint a guardian from the relatives of the deceased person.[38] Regarding the qualifications of these guardians, it is declared that an intelligent, good man of ripe experience, or an elderly, faithful, and good woman was eligible for appointment. It is added, that there was no objection to appointing as guardians a man who had already undertaken such responsibilities in other families, but, in the case of a woman, this was not to be permitted, the rule being that a woman could be a guardian in one family only.[39] The guardians were entitled to draw their expenses from the property which they administered.[40] Mismanagement or squandering away of the property by the guardians was a punishable crime.[41]

**Oaths.** The administration of oaths to the litigant parties and their witnesses, to ascertain their innocence or guilt in a case, which we saw in early pages, was a concomitant of all legal procedure, continued during the Sasanian period. The oath was not to be broken under any circumstances, and we have

[35] Dd. 56. 6.
[36] Dd. 56. 4, 7.
[37] Dd. 56. 5.
[38] Dd. 58. 2-5.
[39] Dd. 57. 2-4.
[40] Dd. 56. 8, 9.
[41] Dd. 60. 3.

the picture, given by Viraf, of the violaters of oath, pierced in hell by spurs, arrows, stones, and axes.[42] Adarbad admonishes his son never to dishonour his name by not keeping a vow.[43] As in early times, the oath was taken to convince a person of the truthfulness of one's statement. For example, when youthful prince Artakhshir flees from the court of the Parthian king, and launches upon his adventure of recovering his ancestral throne, he meets with an influential chief, who is willing to help him with his sons and his army. The prince at first hesitated to confide in the chief, whereupon, the latter took an oath and convinced him of his good faith.[44]

**The method of administering oaths.** In the extant Pahlavi literature we find no description of the method of administering oaths. We have, however, a Persian version, evidently derived from a Pahlavi source, which describes the manner in which oaths were administered, and gives the formulas recited on such occasions. We are given an example, in which a man having borrowed something from another, denied having received anything from him. The transaction, according to the statement of the plaintiff, was contracted without any written document, and in absence of witnesses. The only course left, under the circumstances, was to administer an oath to the defendant. The last hope was entertained that the defendant would dread the divine disfavour, which he would incur if he swore falsely, and would confess his guilt. When the disputants approached the officer of oath, and laid their case before him, he explained to them the great harm that would accrue to the party who should swear falsely, and gave them a night to ponder over their responsibilities, and to try to come to an amicable settlement. The parties, however, appeared next day before the administrator of oath and undertook to submit to the ceremonial of oath. The officer asked the defendant to bathe, to put on new clothes, and to wear the mouth-covering. He was then made to stand at a place, and a priest drew a furrow round him, and chanted the Ahunavar formula while doing so. Fire was then brought to the place and fed with incense. A clean bowl with a little water and a piece of bread was put before the oath-taker, who was now asked to recite the litany to the sun, and take his seat before the fire. The priest once again tried to dissuade the

[42] AV. 52. [43] AnAtM. 114. [44] KrNArtP. 4. 5.

person from swearing, and reminded him of the unescapable calamity incurred by all false swearers. When persuasion failed, he was finally sworn in the following words:

'I, N or M, truthfully swear in the presence of Ormazd, who is full of glory and radiance, before Vohuman, before Ardibahisht, who is present here in the form of the burning flame, before Shahrivar, who is near me, before Spandarmad, on whose earth I now stand, before Khurdad and Amardad, who are present in the form of bread and water, which I shall have to eat now. And I swear in the name of the Guardian Spirit of Zartusht, the Spitman, and that of Adarbad Mahraspand, and in the name of all righteous Guardian Spirits, that are, and that will be, that I have no knowledge of, and I do not possess anything of gold, silver, iron, or clothes, or any object created by Ormazd, belonging to thee, N or M . . . If the oath that I am now taking be false, I hereby undertake to bear at the Bridge of Judgment, the entire load of all sins committed by the sorcerer Zohak, from the eighth year of his life to the time that he was imprisoned, that is, for a thousand years I further agree that if I swear falsely, I am prepared to undergo the retribution of all sins committed by the sorcerer Afrasiyab, from the fifteenth year of his life to the time that he was killed Moreover, if this oath of mine be false, I hereby dedicate unto thee, N or M, the merit of all my good deeds, and I agree to undergo the retribution at the Bridge of Judgment of the sins that thou, N or M, hast committed. The angels Mihr, Srosh, and Rashn know that I speak the truth, my soul knows that I speak the truth, my heart and tongue are at one, I do not speak anything with my tongue, that is not in my heart, I have not played a fraudulent part in taking this oath, and I avow in the name of God, that I have said that which is.'

The defendant was then made to recite one Ashem Vohu and to partake of the water and bread. This terminated the oath-giving ceremony, and the disputants went their way, the plaintiff piously consoling himself that though he did not recover his lost article, and the man has escaped punishment upon earth, yet by the performance of the ritual of oath, he would incur a terrible punishment in heaven through his accusation.[45]

**Ordeals.** The custom of putting persons suspected of guilt to physical tests which prevailed among the Kianian people, has been discussed at length in early pages. This method of detecting crime seems to have been in vogue among the Sasanians also. Among the chief kinds of the ordeals mentioned in the Pahlavi works of this period, are those in which poisonous food was given to the litigants,[46] and a variety of hot ordeals, in which persons undergoing an ordeal had to touch or walk over some red hot substance, or to pour burning metal over the body.[47]

[45] For the text and translation, see my article, in *Asha*, 1. 66-70, Karachi, 1910.
[46] Dd. 37. 74.
[47] SIS. 13. 17.

Fire is said to be the surest discriminator between the innocent and the guilty.[48] The man who was innocent at heart, it is alleged, would pass through the fiery liquid without his tongue being scorched, or feet being burned; the fiery flame, on the contrary, would seem to him as a mild light leading him onward to vindicate his innocence.[49] The wicked, on the other hand, would be burned and fall exposed of his guilt.[50] The noted example, which the writers of the Sasanian and the subsequent period frequently quote is that of the great Dastur Adarbad, who, it is said, submitted to the ordeal of the molten metal, to convince the people of Iran of the excellence of their faith, which was greatly undermined by heretical teachings. The burning liquid, which was poured upon his breast, it is alleged, failed to hurt him in any way, and he came forth unscathed.[51]

**The classification of crimes.** The criminal code of the Sasanians was, in the main, the one prescribed in Avestan law books. However, some modifications and changes, suited to the times, had been adopted. We have on the authority of Tansar, that his royal master abrogated inquitous laws that were in vogue in early Iran. In his letter to the king of Tabaristan, the learned Dastur declares that crimes could be divided into three groups. The first place was to be given to those crimes that man committed against his creator, and he points to heresy, as the revolt from God. The second group consisted of the crimes of the people against their king, the most conspicuous crimes of this class, being treason and revolt. In the third, or last, group, according to him, fell the crimes that man committed against his fellowmen.[52]

**Religious offences.** The Sasanian legislation, as we shall see, leans towards religious intolerance. Tansar, however, asserts that King Artakhshir greatly modified the rigour of the law, and states that heresy was in early days a capital crime, and the heretic was at once ordered to be killed. His royal master, on the other hand, so changed the law that when a man was charged with heresy, he was sentenced to an year's im-

[48] Dk., vol 12, bk 6. 313, p. 27.
[49] Dk., vol. 4, pp. 261, 262.
[50] SIS. 15. 15, 17.
[51] SIS. 15. 16; Sg. 10. 70; Dk, vol. 9, p. 649; vol. 14, bk. 7. 4. 4, p. 37; AV 1. 16.
[52] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, 1. p. 524.

prisonment, and continuous attempts were made to impress upon him the excellence of the national faith, and to reclaim him from heresy. Should such preachings and remonstrances on the part of the priests prove ineffectual, then at last he was to be condemned to death.[53]

However, the Pahlavi works of the period denounce unsparingly those who doubted or criticized the established teachings of the priests. The heretics are called demons, who are to be put out of the group of the faithful, as the promoters of the religion of Ahriman. There is no hope for them upon the earth when they lived, there is no salvation for their souls when they died.[54] The arch-heretic Mani, whose eclectic system of religion, despite the persecution of its followers in Persia, rapidly spread beyond the borders of the country of its origin to China in the East and to Europe in the West, was flayed to death by the order of King Bahram I, and his skin was stuffed with straw and hung up as a warning to others.[55] Christianity, we have already noticed, had penetrated into Persia long before the Sasanians founded their empire, and the Christian Church frequently won converts from the ruling community. Apostacy from Zoroastrianism was a capital offence, yet it was not always resorted to, until, when the frantic zeal of the Christian priests and the infuriated feelings of the Mobads aggravated the situation. A dishonest person who falsely undertook to cleanse another by means of ceremonial ablution, had to suffer the dislocation of his joints, one by one, and receive food as coarse as that given to the dogs.[56] Ten years of prison are prescribed by the Dinkard for those who lapsed into superstitious idolatry.[57]

**Moral wrongs.** The abhorrence with which the Avestan writers looked upon those who committed crimes against morality was shared by the Pahlavi writers. It was sinful to lead astray the thoughts of another's wife.[58] The woman who violated her nuptial bed, it is said, withered the trees, dried the waters and destroyed the righteousness of holy persons, and was worthy of death.[59] We gather from another source that the male offender

[53] *Ib*, p. 524.
[54] For ref. see my *Zoroastrian Theology*, pp. 209, 210, New York, 1914.
[55] *Ib.*, pp. 210, 211.
[56] Sd. 36. 9.
[57] Dk., vol. 5, p. 271.
[58] AnAtM. 82.
[59] Sd. 67. 4, 6.

who committed adultery with the privileged wife of a nobleman, was banished and the faithless woman had her nose and ears cut off.[60] It was a capital crime for the man who had beguiled a woman, if he procured the death of the child born of the illicit union to hide the shame.[61] Abortion is declared heinous and the perpetrators had to suffer heavy punishments in hell.[62] The child born of such union was illegitimate,[63] and no position of honour was given to it, when it grew of age.[64] If the crime was committed with a non-Zoroastrian woman, and a child was born, the man was responsible for the sins that the child born and bred in an alien faith would commit throughout its life.[65] Viraf depicts the wretched woman and her paramour undergoing a most excruciating torture in hell.[66]

Among the worst of abominations put under the group of crimes deserving of capital punishment in this world, and a horrible fate in the next, is the unnatural crime, and legislators condemn it with the same vehemence that we saw among the Avestan jurists.[67]

**Criminal offences and their punishments.** The various degrees of assault between a man's lifting his hand to strike another and killing him, were punished in the Kianian period, with a graduated scale of lashes with a scourge. These lashes which extended from five to two hundred, according to the gravity and repetition of a crime, were converted into money value.[68] Manslaughter was a capital crime, and the murderer was condemned to death.[69] Those who were sentenced to capital punishment, were hung upon a pole and shot with arrows, or suspended on a lofty gibbet by a twisted lasso.[70] The heresiarch Mani, we have seen, was flayed to death, and the communist Mazdak was hung head-downwards and pierced to death with a shower of arrows.[71] Other forms of punishment were confinement, the cutting off

[60] Hori, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
[61] Sd. 63. 4, 5.
[62] AV. 64, 78.
[63] Sd. 63. 7.
[64] Dd. 78, 12.
[65] Dd. 78. 8, 9.
[66] AV. 24, 69, 71, 81, 85, 88, 95.
[67] Dk., vol. 1, pp. 14, 15; vol. 9, p. 631; vol. 10, bk. 6. 80, p. 23.
[68] SlS. 1. 1, 2; 11. 2; 16. 1-3.
[69] Dk., vol. 9, p. 631.
[70] ShN. 7. 325.
[71] ShN. 7. 209.

of the nose or the foot of the culprit, the shaving of his head, and the shaving of hair of one of his temples, evidently to humiliate the offender, and the hanging of a pillorying board on the neck of the criminal.[72] Confining in a dungeon was still another form of punishment.[73] A later treatise lays down that if a man stole a dirham coin, he should be made to repay two dirhams, the one that he stole, and the other as a fine. The frequent repetition of theft, with no sign of improvement on the part of the thief, was met with added fines, imprisonment, amputations of ears and hands, and, in the last resort, with the punishment of hanging him on a stake.[74] Due consideration was to be shown to a respectable person, if he was, perchance, involved in a crime, and he was not to be consigned to the prison without due regard for his position.[75] The highwayman who robbed a person without causing him bodily injury, escaped with lighter forms of punishment, but if he caused bodily injury to the person, he was to be hanged.[76] In some cases, highway robbery was punished by imprisonment for life.[77] Tansar informs us that his royal master commanded the judges to deal with the criminals for their first wrong acts with comparative leniency. They might pardon those offenders who acted on the impulse of the moment, and repented of their crimes, or might impose fines on others, but if the offenders reverted to criminal acts, they were to be punished by the cutting off of their ears or noses.[78] Regarding those who revolted from the royal authority, or who fled from the battlefield, says Tansar, instantaneous death was the consequences in early times, but the founder of the Sasanian Empire, we are told, dealt out capital punishment on a few only of these convicts, to inspire respect for law and discipline, and pardoned others of their guilt.[79]

Convicts had their hands shackled and their feet fettered.[80] Banishment was another form of punishment inflicted upon dangerous persons.[81]

[72] Hori, *op. cit*, p. 249.
[73] ShN. 6. 282; 7. 97, 365.
[74] Sd. 64. 2-6.
[75] AnAtM 57.
[76] Dk, vol. 9, p. 631
[77] Hori, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
[78] Darmesteter, *op. cit*, pp. 525, 526.
[79] *Ib.*, p. 524.
[80] Dk., vol. 6, pp. 355, 381.
[81] Mirkhond, pp. 368, 382.

## CHAPTER LI

## PRIESTS AND PRIESTHOOD

**Priestly designations.** We saw in the previous pages that the profession of priesthood in Iran had from early times been hereditary, and that the son inherited the sacerdotal office of his father. Sasanian priesthood was likewise hereditary and had grown into a powerful caste. In our examination of the position of the Iranian priesthood, we saw that the class designation of priests in Eastern Iran among the Kianians was *āthravan,* but was *magi* in Western Iran among the Medes and the Achaemenians. The term *āthravan* continued to be applied to the priests, as their class designation, by its Pahlavi correspondent *āsronān.* The word *magopat,* or *maggpat,* corresponding to its Greek form Magi, or Magus, now came to be used, both as a designation of the priestly caste and as the personal title of a priest to distinguish him from a layman. This priestly title continues to be used with its dual significance to this day under its Modern Persian form *mobad.* Another title applied to a learned priest during this period is *aerpat,* from the Avestan *aethrapaiti,* literally meaning, 'master of knowledge.' The supreme priest among the Avestan people was called *Zarathushtratema* or most like Zarathushtra. This designation under its Pahlavi form *Zartushttum* is occasionally used.[1] The forms most frequently used among the Sasanians were *magopatān magopat* and *dastobar,* corresponding to later *mobadān mobad* and *dastur,* or the High Priest. Among some important substitutes used to designate the office of the High Priest may be mentioned '*den peshopāi*,' 'the leader of religion,' corresponding to Modern Persian *peshvā*,[2] and '*den framātār*,' 'the preceptor of religion.'[3]

Women were privileged to perform certain minor ceremonies,

[1] Dk., vol. 2, pp. 111, 112; vol. 12, bk 6. 300, p. 14.
[2] Dd. 1. 10.
[3] Bd. 33. 2.

and even, at times, to act as the officiating priestesses among women,[4] under the condition that none should be in the menses, when so administering.[5]

**The place of the priesthood among the Sasanians.** Artakhshir, the founder of the Sasanian Empire and the rejuvenator of Zoroastrianism, himself belonged to the priestly caste. He raised the priesthood to a more dignified position than that it enjoyed during the Achaemenian period.[6] He was a staunch believer in the doctrine of the unity of the Church and the State. The two, according to him, were like brother and sister, neither of whom could flourish alone.[7] They were interwoven together like two pieces of brocade.[8] The sacerdotal caste, under these circumstances, naturally rose to great power, and remained in the ascendancy until the last days of the empire. The most important of the Pahlavi works of this period, the Dinkard, states that priests are to the other classes of society, what the head is to the human body.[9]

**Qualifications of a priest.** As the position of priests was exalted, so were their responsibilities great. An ideal priest required virtues both of head and heart. Describing the qualifications of a priest, the Dinkard says that he should be a firm believer, helpful, courageous, charitable, true, contented, and persevering.[10] Heresy, greed, and sloth were held as serious offences in a priest.[11] Bodily defects, such as deafness, blindness, and dumbness, disqualified a priest from officiating in the rituals.[12] The High Priest should be prudent, good-natured, of wide intelligence, a thoughtful person, learned, of advanced age, and experienced.[13] Furthermore, he should be pure of disposition, possessed of innate wisdom, an embellisher of religion, devoted, well-versed in the sacred texts and their commentaries, of good character, large-hearted, high-thinking, controlling his bodily passions, true, and just.[14] Likewise, he should be well-versed

[4] SlS. 10. 35.
[5] Nr. bk. 1. 16. 4; bk. 2 13 11
[6] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 57.
[7] Masudi, tr. Barbier de Meynard, 2 162, Paris, 1861-77.
[8] ShN. 6. 286.
[9] Dk., vol. 1, p. 37; vol 9, p. 606; Sg. 1. 20-24.
[10] Dk, vol. 7, p. 477.
[11] Cf. Nr. bk. 1. 1. 2, 3; Mkh 59. 7.
[12] Nr. bk. 2. 13. 17
[13] Dk., vol. 6, pp. 359, 360.
[14] Dk., vol. 4, pp. 225, 226.

in the sacred legal texts, and capable of asserting his authority.[15] Unto such a worthy chief, the priests should look as their ornament and glory; the warriors should regard him as their armour, the agriculturists, as the source of their happiness, and the artisans should take him for their garment.[16] The High Priest, it is said, should be appointed after ascertaining his qualifications.[17]

**Their work.** The primary duty of priests was to maintain religion in its purity, to perform rituals, to teach people, to lead them to goodness,[18] and to inspire zeal for religion.[19] The priests, it is said, should strive zealously to establish institutions for religious instruction.[20] They were expected to exercise their great influence over the king, and to nurture his religious inclinations.[21] A priest is declared to be a shepherd, with people for his flock,[22] and as such he was to guide them safely on the path of duty.[23] A good priest could not fail to inspire with righteousness, those with whom he came in contact.[24]

Religion, it is stated, is kept alive by the High Priest and the king,[25] the two highest personalities in the country.[26] A king who has faith in his High Priest is declared to be good.[27] Moreover, the king is advised not to undertake any work without the advice of the High Priest.[28] It is for the good of the people that they should obey the orders of the High Priest, just as they obeyed the commands of the king,[29] and should follow his guidance in every matter.[30] They should learn from him what they should do, and what they should not,[31] and he would be sure to make them religious, civilized, glorious, intelligent, and happy.[32] In addition to his position as the head of religion, the High Priest

[15] SIS. 8. 11.
[16] Dk., vol. 4, p. 253.
[17] Dk., vol. 8, p. 451.
[18] Mkh. 31. 4-8.
[19] Dk., vol. 7, p. 450.
[20] Dk., vol. 5, pp 282, 283.
[21] Dk., vol. 7, p. 479.
[22] Dk., vol. 7, p. 483.
[23] SIS. 17. 8; Dk., vol 9, p. 597.
[24] Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. 325, p. 32.
[25] Dk., vol. 8, p. 439.
[26] Dk., vol. 7, p. 484.
[27] Dk., vol. 6, p. 422.
[28] Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6. 30, p. 9; cf. KrNArt. 9 15-23; 10 6.
[29] Sd. 26. 7; Dk., vol. 6, pp. 418, 419.
[30] Sd. 27. 5.
[31] Dk., vol. 7, p. 480.
[32] Dk., vol. 7, p. 488; vol. 9, p. 602.

had lodged in him supreme power in matters educational and judicial.[33] He could forgive a guilty person,[34] or punish him, even capitally.[35] Wrong-doers are exhorted to confess and atone for their wrongs before the High Priest.[36] He could heal the disease of the soul, that is, absolve man from sin, just as a physician could cure the body.[37]

**The means of their livelihood.** Artakhshir, the founder of the dynasty, it is said, assigned lands to the priests for their maintenance, and allowed them to claim the tithe of all their possessions from their co-religionists.[38] The high offices of the state were generally occupied by the learned members of the priestly class. Occasionally a talented priest rose to the position of prime minister of the empire. These high officials received the usual remuneration attached to their position. Those among the priests, who were attached to the temples, or who performed rituals, were paid by the laity. Large estates were attached to the great temples, and the gifts showered by the king upon the votaries of the temples, whenever he came to worship at the shrine, formed the chief means of the livelihood. Those among the priests who were not enlightened enough to attain to high positions in the empire, and who did not find sufficient ceremonial work to earn a living, were permitted to engage in the callings of farmers, shepherds, writers, or warriors.[39]

[33] Dk., vol. 2, pp. 72, 73; vol. 9, pp. 581, 584, 609, 610, 623, 624.
[34] Sd. 26. 6.
[35] SIS. 8. 5, 6, 21.
[36] SIS. 8. 1, 2; 13. 29; Sd. 45. 6; Dk., vol. 5, p. 271
[37] Dk., vol. 1, pp. 8, 9.
[38] Rawlinson, *op. cit*, p. 57.
[39] Dd. 46. 5, 6.

## CHAPTER LII

## WARFARE

**The profession of arms.** In common with their great ancestors the Achaemenians, the Sasanians held the warrior's profession in great esteem. The natural aptitude for a military life which they had inherited was fostered with care. Like his Achaemenian predecessor, every Sasanian king personally led his armies in times of war. He invoked divine help in his warlike undertakings, and, as we see him in the Shah Namah, he constantly repaired to the fire-temples, both at the opening and at the close of a war. One of the highest titles of royalty was *argpat*, meaning, literally, 'commander of a fortress.'[1] Princes and sons of noblemen, and youths who aspired to glory, were trained from their earliest days, in exercises, rigorous discipline, riding and hunting, and manly games like polo, thus learning to endure fatigue and privation with fortitude.[2] Speaking about the qualifications of a warrior, the Dinkard states that he should be stout in build, of impetuous valour, and ready to meet death with indifference.[3] Greater consideration was shown to the members of this class than to the peasants and artisans. It is said that they deserved such special recognition, because they risked their lives for their king, when others lived in comparative ease at home. Members of the other groups were expected to salute and honour the warrior chiefs, when they met them on the way.[4]

**The troops and their officers.** The flower of the army was of course recruited from the Persians themselves, but the various subject races living under the Persian banner contributed largely to the army. A fairly large number of troops was maintained on fixed pay, and their names were entered on the roll. On every occasion, when the body of troops came to draw the pay,

[1] See Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr. Nariman, in JIA. 8. 59, 60.

[2] KrNArtP. 1. 23, 25, 28, 30.

[3] Dk., vol. 2, p. 95; vol. 5, p. 299.

[4] Darmesteter, *Alleged Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, 1. pp. 531, 532.

every soldier was ordered to be present with his accoutrements for inspection before the paymaster. This reform was introduced by Noshrivan to remove the corrupt methods that had crept in to defraud the state by showing a large number of soldiers on the pay rolls, than were actually on the field, or by passing off ill-equipped and unfit men as fighting units[5] In addition to this regular army, mercenaries were generally hired to augment the military force, whenever the country was at war with an enemy. The selection of this body of troops was made from martial races living in the adjoining countries. Soldiers from distant lands, such as India and Arabia, also swelled the number. These men fought Persia's battles for payments in money, or for a stipulated share in the booty that fell to the conquering armies. They fought valiantly and often faithfully. But they could not always be trusted, and instances are not wanting in which they patiently waited to see on which side fortune inclined, or transferred their allegiance to those promising higher wages The officers in command of the armies, thus composed of Persians and foreigners, were generally Persians. The Commander-in-chief of all the forces of the empire was styled *Irān sipāhpat* or *sipāhsālār* or *arteshtārānsālār,* and had under his command officers of graded ranks. Persons of distinction were generally exalted to the rank of a commander, an honour which was not always enviable. The richest rewards and highest honours awaited a victorious commander, but an unsuccessful general often met the most cruel fate at the hands of an infuriated monarch.[6] Generally the king commanded the armies in person. Though the king's presence on the battlefield was inspiring and salutary to the commanders and soldiers, the luxurious display of the palace, which entered the camp with the sovereign had bad effect upon the conduct of his higher officers. Couches and tables of massive silver, rich ornaments and costly apparel filled the royal tents, and even those also of the chiefs and nobles, and often added to the booty reaped by the enemy, when the Persian arms were defeated.[7] The rulers of the House of Sasan had inherited from the Achaemenian monarchs the unfortunate custom of transporting their seraglios of wives, concubines, eunuchs, and slaves to the camp. The royal

[5] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy,* pp. 443, 444.
[6] *Ib.,* pp. 419, 518
[7] *Ib.,* pp 217, 577.

example was followed by the allies, chiefs, and nobles, with the result that the wives of the chiefs and commanders accompanied the armies with a large retinue of servants and eunuchs and a burdensome train of baggage. They proved a source of great impediment at all steps during the fight, and of great embarrassment in times of defeat, when they fell among the captured or killed.[8]

**The footmen, horsemen, charioteers, and the elephant corps.** For a greater period of its life of about four hundred years, Sasanian Iran was at war with the Romans in the West and the Epthalites, Armenians, Turks, Arabs, and other peoples in the East, and the people had only occasional breathing spaces to recover from the periodical exhaustion. Warlike preparations were generally made in winter, when stores were accumulated, and armies were collected and equipped with armour, lances, round shields, swords, crossbows, bows and arrows.[9] The army was divided into *aspwārgān* or the horsemen, the *pāigān* or footmen, and those that fought from the huge wooden towers raised on the backs of elephants. Among the most commonly used weapons of war, according to the Shah Namah, were swords, scimitars, ox-head maces, bows and arrows, and lassos. The strength of the Persian army lay chiefly in its archers. The foot archers were equipped with bows and quivers filled with sharp arrows, and the huge wattled shields, which they had inherited from the Achaemenians. The horse archers wore polished breastplates and cuirasses, and were mounted on horses, also heavily armoured. The glittering armour of the commanders was conspicuous from a distance. The king's helmet, breastplate, greaves, and armpieces were usually made of solid gold.[10] Another division of foot soldiers carried swords and long spears. The use of scythed chariots was constant among the Achaemenians; it was occasionally resorted to among the Sasanians.[11] The elephant corps recruited from India formed an important factor in the army. Each elephant carried a tower on its back, in which were skilled archers.[12] The scouts moved in advance

[8] *Ib.*, pp. 85, 123, 326, 514.
[9] Cf. Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, pp. 248, 249, Bombay, 1908.
[10] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 567.
[11] *Ib.*, p. 648, n. 4, p. 649.
[12] Cf. Hori, *op. cit.*, p. 249; Christensen, *op. cit*, 8 281.

and reconnoitred the field to apprise the army of the movements of the enemy.[13]

**The method of besieging fortified towns.** The towns of the enemy by which the Persian armies happened to pass, before encountering the enemy in the open field, were generally asked to surrender without contest, and in many cases the people of the towns ransomed themselves at a price fixed by the Persians. When the people of a town, that was strongly fortified, refused to surrender, they were besieged. On such occasions, the ramparts were brought down by putting up the catapults on the four sides of a stronghold,[14] trenches were dug at a little distance from the walls of the fortress and the troops were made to advance slowly towards the ditch, under cover of hurdles. Mounds of sufficient height to place them on a level with the garrison inside the fort were thrown against the walls. Scaling parties then strove to reach the walls by means of ladders. Moving towers of a greater height than the walls were constructed, and the archers stationed therein showered the defenders with arrows and stones, and hurled blazing bitumen and naphtha upon them.[15] Mines were dug near the walls, which then were battered with the ram to breach them.

**The fighting.** When the army reached the spot, the enemy was expected to meet them, the elephant corps was stationed in the front, and was followed by the cavalry. Foot archers remained behind the horse. The king occupied the central place in the army and the national banner of the early Pishdadian fame was unfurled before the royal tent. This flag, which we have seen, was a leather apron of the patriot blacksmith Kawa, had by this time grown immensely in size and value by the rich additions of silk and brocades studded with precious stones, made by successive kings. When this emblem of Persian greatness finally passed into the hands of the Arab conquerors, it is reported to have measured eighteen feet in length and twelve feet in breadth, and is estimated to have been valued at thirty thousand pounds sterling.[16] Besides this chief banner, there were several small standards carried by various divisions of the army. No less than twenty-eight standards fell into the hands of

[13] ShN. 6. 231.
[14] ShN. 7. 254.
[15] Rawlinson, *op cit.*, pp. 177, 411.
[16] *Ib*, pp. 554, 562, 563, n. 6.

Heraclius, when he defeated the Persian army near Dastagird.[17] The standards of an enemy were prized as most valuable trophies of war, and the palace of Dastagird alone had about three hundred Roman standards, which the Persians had captured in early years from their enemy, and which were recovered by Heraclius.[18]

Solitary instances are found in which, like the early Pishdadians and Kianians, champions were chosen from the contending armies, in order to decide the issue of the battle by single combats, instead of by general fighting.[19] As a rule, however, there was a general engagement between the rival forces as soon as they met. The archers who formed the chief strength of the Persian army, and whose sharp action with their arrows was always dreaded by the enemy, opened their accurate shower. A powerful detachment of archers mounted on elephants rushed on the enemy, darting their arrows from their elevated positions, the horse and foot archers incessantly delivering their arrows from their places. The archers did their work skillfully under all circumstances. They gave trouble to the retreating enemy by hanging on his rear, and quickly dispatching the arrows on their errands of death. In times of defeat, when they were themselves on the run, they darted their arrows backwards with equal rapidity, and harassed the pursuing foe. When the fighting armies came close to one another, fighting with swords and spears began.

**Truce and treaty.** When either party was exhausted, overtures were made for a truce, and representatives of both sides met to discuss the terms. A truce was generally concluded, and, during its continuance, both parties mutually agreed to lay down their arms. This temporary period of the cessation of hostilities extended from a few days to some months or sometimes even to years. For example, when Justinian's envoys visited Noshirvan at Ctesiphon with the proposal for peace, the Persian king suggested that a truce should be concluded between the Persians and the Romans for five years, before they could finally settle the terms of peace. During the period of the truce, it was arranged, that the causes that had led the two nations to incessant hostilities should be carefully considered and removed, and

[17] *Ib.*, p. 522.
[18] *Ib.*, p 525.
[19] *Ib.*, pp. 288, 559, ShN. 6. 297.

a mutual understanding should be arrived at.[20] When on such occasions, a truce was faithfully observed, it was followed by a treaty, by which the nations agreed to remain at peace with each other for the duration of the treaty, which was specified as seven, or thirty, or fifty years, or for all time. The contracting parties interchanged oaths for the faithful observation of the treaty, and exchanged hostages. The document was sealed with the royal seal and, we are informed, was dispatched with a bag of salt sealed with the royal ring signifying the sanctity of the oath.[21]

**Treatment allotted to the vanquished enemy.** The fate of the defenders of a subdued town depended upon the annoyance they had given to the victor. If the armies succeeded in vanquishing the enemy without much bloodshed on the part of the victor, the treatment of the defenders was not severe. But if the resistance offered by the beleaguered garrison inside the fortified town was stubborn, and had cost the king much effort and many lives, he pillaged the town and slaughtered the inhabitants. A general massacre of the unfortunate inhabitants, under such circumstances, was the outcome. The bas-relief at Shapur, shows King Noshirvan seated on the throne attended by his guards, witnessing the procession of the prisoners ushered in by soldiers and men bringing booty. Among the various things thus brought are the slaughtered heads of the chief enemies of the king. Such cruel scenes perpetuated in stone by the Persian monarch could be paralleled by similar deeds of his Roman adversaries. When Julian overpowered the Persian garrison of Maogamalcha, he put all its inhabitants without distinction of age or sex to the sword, and carried fire and smoke to the caves in which some unfortunate fugitives had concealed themselves.[22] When Heraclius triumphed over the Maruzas, he had the head of the Persian general cut off, and sent it as a trophy to Maurice.[23] While advancing on his victorious march, he destroyed all fire-temples and delivered to the flames the towns, and villages through which he passed.[24]

Ordinarily, it was the practice with the Sasanians, as it was with the Achaemenians, to remove the prisoners of war to Persia and to settle them in separate quarters.[25] Noshirvan built the

[20] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 404.
[21] See Christensen, *op. cit*, JIA 8. 254.
[22] Rawlinson, *op. cit*, p. 211.
[23] *Ib.*, p. 465.
[24] *Ib.*, p. 512.
[25] ShN. 6. 298.

new Antioch near Ctesiphon for his Syrian captives and Greek slaves, and constructed in the new city baths and a spacious hippodrome for their entertainment.[26] Prisoners of distinction were always fettered with silver chains.

The vanquished enemy was often asked to supply hostages of royal blood.[27]

**The empire without a powerful fleet.** The Sasanians ruled over an empire that was larger in extent than any other kingdom in their days, yet they did not possess a fleet of their own. They had consequently to borrow ships from other peoples whenever their armies had to cross the seas. It was owing to this disadvantage that the armies of Khusru Parviz, gathered on the Asiatic shore, were deterred by the presence of the powerful Roman galleys from crossing the narrow channel dividing them from the European shore, in their attempted attack on Constantinople.

[26] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 395.
[27] ShN. 6. 298, 350, 355, 7. 262.

## CHAPTER LIII

## ART AND ARCHITECTURE

**Their revival.** We have already seen with what great zeal the Achaemenian monarchs worked to raise magnificent architectural monuments to commemorate their illustrious names. Art and architecture ceased to flourish in Persia with the fall of their mighty empire. After five centuries of decay under the Parthian rule, architectural revival began with the rise to power of the House of Sasan. The Sasanian monarchs were great builders, and their eminent kings, such as Shapur I, Noshirvan, and Khusru Parviz, even in the midst of protracted wars, patronized art, constructed magnificent edifices, and sculptured exquisite bas-reliefs to perpetuate their greatness in monuments of stone. Sasanian art, as we see it in the ruins of the monuments to-day, is full of life and movement. Though Byzantine influence has affected it in some cases, it is essentially an art expressive of its nationality. The high vaulted arch, as the main entrance of buildings, and the dome, have contributed permanent features to Moslem architecture. Despite the ravages of time and vandalism of man, numerous remains of the Sasanian structures still exist to exhibit the glory of their achievements. The chief among these are the ruins of palaces at Firuzabad and Sarvistan to the south-east of Shiraz, of those at Ctesiphon, Mashita, and at Qasr-i Shirin, and the bas-reliefs at Naksh-i Rustam, Naksh-i Rajab, and Tak-i Bustan.

**The palaces.** The royal edifices are mostly built of broken stones or well-baked bricks, joined by mortar of lime and sand. The palace of Khusru Parviz at Mashita, however, is built of well-dressed hard stones. The huge stone blocks used in the Achaemenian structures gave them an imposing aspect, and the elaborate sculptures carved on the grand staircases and porches added to their magnificence. The Sasanian palaces built of rubble, had their rough surface covered with stucco. The palaces are of oblong, rectangular shape, and measure from between 300 and 350 feet in length and about 150 and 175 feet in depth.

The entrance to a palace, which, usually, is the only entrance, is always in the centre. In place of the massive portals of the Achaemenian palaces, flanked by two winged-bulls, we have now a superb arch, rising almost to the full height of the building, and leading into a vaulted hall. The colossal doorway of the palace of Noshirvan at Ctesiphon, as it stands to-day, measures about 84 feet in width and 95 feet in height. The porch opens into the great hall, which at Ctesiphon measures 72 feet in width, 85 in height and 115 in depth.[1] The hypostyle construction of Darius and Cyrus, in which beautiful fluted columns filled the Audience Hall, and supported the flat roofs, does not appear in the palaces of their royal descendants. The halls of the Sasanian palaces are surmounted by cupolas and domes, egg-shaped and spherical The palaces which, as a rule, are of a single story, have several domes of the same size, or of different dimensions. The height of the domes, over the main halls of the palaces, measures between 70 and 100 feet from the ground. The dome rests on the pendentives, and its circular base over the square halls is obtained by constructing several semi-circular arches, projecting across the angles of the hall.[2] Besides the great oblong hall, each palace contains a number of rooms of various sizes opening one into another, or from the three sides into an open court, which is an invariable feature of the rear part of the palace

Ornamented doorways and false windows with full-centred niches, reed-like pilasters reaching from the ground to the cornice, with a series of doubly recessed high narrow arches, are some of the chief devices employed for the exterior ornamentation at Firuzabad.[3] The palace at Ctesiphon, though having no upper story, is so constructed that, from the outside, the string-courses give it an appearance of having three or four stories. On both sides of the grand arch, pilasters in pairs on the first or basement story, and single ones on the second story have doubly arched recesses between them, whereas the third and fourth stories have a number of arches uninterrupted by pilasters.[4] By far the richest and most magnificent ornamentation appears on the palace of that most extravagant of all Sasanian monarchs,

[1] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p 592.
[2] *Ib*, p 583, cf Parrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia*, p. 168
[3] Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 584, 585.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 593, 594.

Khusru Parviz, at Mashita The front wall, built of hard stone which resembles marble, is divided into triangles by ornamented zig-zags. Here are to be seen carved rosettes, encircled by the lavish decorations representing flowers, fruits, branches and leaves of trees, interspersed with various scenes, in which men, and birds and beasts unite to lend the ornamentation their unsurpassed beauty.[5]

The religious architecture of the period, in the structures which sheltered the sacred fires, have not survived the ravages of time, in a condition that could give us an idea of their architectural features. Some of the more renowned fire-temples had in their service a large number of residential priests. Libraries and treasuries were attached to them, and we have it from Albiruni that King Piroz borrowed a large sum of money from the custodians of some fire-temples to relieve his subjects from the distress caused by drought during his reign.[6] The sacred places were frequented by large concourses of people on festive occasions, as also by the king, for whom a special golden throne was kept in all famous fire-temples.[7] The structures, naturally, must have been spacious and imposing, but nothing remains to-day to give us an idea of their design Of the innumerable caravansarais, built for the convenience of wayfarers and traders during the period, the fortifications, bridges, and dikes constructed by the architectural skill of the Sasanian builders, the ruins of a fortified stone structure of the time of Noshirvan at Ahuan[8] and a dike at Shuster are the only remains left to-day. The latter is a dam about twelve hundred feet in length and twenty feet in breadth, across the river Karun. It is built of cut stones, held together by lime mortar and iron clamps, with two openings in the centre, to let the water pass on its natural course Nothing has remained of the network of the great fortifications, often surrounded by thick double walls, built of brick laid in bitumen and concrete, as also of the important towns surrounded by high walls, flanked by turrets, with an entrance through the heavy gates, which were closed in time of danger from hostile forces.

[5] *Ib.*, pp 597, 598.
[6] Albiruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr Sachau, p 215, London, 1879.
[7] *Ib*
[8] See Jackson, *From Constantinople to the Home of Omar Khayam*, pp. 156-158, New York, 1911.

**Bas-reliefs.** Sasanian sculptures of great artistic merit are found at Naksh-i Rustam carved below the rock-cut tombs of the Achaemenian kings. The figures of royal personages in the first panel, among whom one is of a woman, as also those in the scenes of a royal combat, carved on the second, third, and fifth panel are not definitely identified. The fourth or the central panel about 35 feet in length and 16 feet in breadth commemorates the victory of Shapur over Valerian, in which the victor is seen mounted upon a horse in full royal attire, and receiving the submission of the Roman Emperor, who kneels before him with hands outstretched in supplication. The sixth panel has King Varahran II with his courtiers, and the seventh records the triumph of King Artakhshir trampling beneath the feet of his horse the prostrate figure of the last of the Parthian kings and himself receiving a ring, the emblem of sovereignty, from the hands of a figure, supposed to be that of Ormazd, mounted on horseback with a sceptre in his left hand. A spirited sculpture, at Naksh-i Rustam represents Varahran IV in the usual royal costume mounted on horseback, in the act of charging his enemy at full speed, piercing him with a spear and throwing the horse down. The figure of the enemy lying under the feet is portrayed as usual, and a standard bearer stands behind the king. A sculpture somewhat similar in design, is found at Firuzabad in which several mounted figures are carved. The two chief of these are engaged in a combat, in which the Sasanian monarch is depicted as wounding his terror-stricken opponent, and throwing his horse headlong to the ground. Three more bas-reliefs depicting the various scenes of the royal life of the Sasanian kings are found at Naksh-i Rajab.

More famous still are the bas-relief sculptures at the delightful park called Tak-i Bostan, 'Arch of the Garden,' near Kermanshah The monuments are sculptured in two grottos, hewn in the solid rock A bas-relief depicts two figures of richly attired crowned personages, in the act of giving and receiving a ribboned coronet. A prostrate figure of some vanquished king lies trampled beneath the feet of the two victors. A fourth figure, about seven feet in length, elaborately dressed with a nimbus covering the head, holding a staff in his hands and with feet resting on a sunflower, regarding whose identification scholarly opinion is divided, has long since passed among the

Zoroastrians as the image of Zoroaster.[9] The smaller of the two vaulted chambers contains the figures of King Shapur II and Shapur III in full royal dress, standing side by side, and each resting his hands on the hilt of his sword. The larger arch, rich in ornamentation, is crowned with a streamered crescent and has figures of flying winged Victories, in Roman style, one on each of the spandrels, holding forth a chaplet in the right hand, and a cup in the left. A delicately executed border adorns the exterior edge of the arch On either side of the arch is a panel, with elaborately carved flower scrolls. At the right, on entering the vault, an animated hunting scene is reproduced in bas-relief. The king is seen riding his horse with his bow passed over his head, attended by a parasol-bearer, by men mounted on horseback and on foot, and by a band of musicians to enliven the scene. Men on elephants are seen driving deers into the enclosure, where their royal master is awaiting the game. The game that has fallen is pictured as being conveyed by camels outside the enclosure. On the left side of the recess is a sculptured representation of wild boar hunting. Men mounted on elephants drive the game into the enclosure, the musicians play upon their instruments, and the royal party is hunting from boats gliding on the waters. The inner wall is divided into upper and lower parts. The second compartment represents King Khusru Parviz receiving a chaplet from the hands of a male figure, variously identified, while at the right hand of the king is a female figure of unknown identity presenting a garland of victory to the king, and pouring upon the ground libation from a vessel which she holds in her left hand. The lower part contains a huge equestrian statue of the same king, clad in full armour and mounted upon a horse, equally huge in size, and heavily caparisoned with rich trappings and tassels, artistically carved.

Of the other bas-reliefs that attract the attention of travellers, those at Shapur may be noted. King Shapur I caused his own figure, mounted on a horse, to be sculptured with an enemy chief prostrate beneath the feet of his horse. The king is surrounded by several mounted guardsmen, members of the vanquished people, men bringing tributes, and animals accompanying them. In another bas-relief the Sasanian king, probably Noshirvan is seen

[9] For a full description of the image, see Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, pp. 217, 218, New York, 1906.

seated in the centre holding a long sceptre in his right hand and in his left clasping a sword whose end rests upon the ground between his feet The king is surrounded by his attendants, and the guards are seen ushering in prisoners, heads of slaughtered enemy chiefs, and booty.

A colossal statue of Shapur I, in mutilated condition about twenty feet in height, and standing on a pedestal is found in the ruins at Shapur The right hand of the king rests on his hip and the left is placed upon the hilt of his sword. The mural crown covers the head from which the hair flows on both sides The king is dressed in a simple costume including a short tunic and trousers.

**Fine arts.** Among miscellaneous articles skillfully executed are to be classed seals, gems, cylinders, and other similar objects. Two cups of Noshirvan, one embossed in silver and the other enamelled with gold, with the monarch's figure engraved are specimens of fine workmanship. A beautiful vase, of the time of Piroz, has the hunting scene engraved on it, in which, the king, mounted on a horse at full gallop, is seen chasing wild animals with his bow and arrow. The magnificence with which the Sasanian monarchs surrounded themselves, and the extravagant expenditure lavished upon the finest specimens of art, which were executed at the royal behest, may be gleaned from the description of the royal carpet, which was included in the immense booty of the Arabs, when the Sasanian Empire passed into their hands. It is said to have been 450 feet long and 90 feet broad It was designed in the form of a garden, in which gold was employed to make the ground, divided with walks wrought in silver Emeralds made the meadows, pearls were used to create rivulets, and diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and other rich stones formed the leaves of trees, flowers, and fruits. The pieces which the kings used to play the game of chess were, it is said, made of rubies and emeralds, coral and turquoise The art of manufacturing rugs, carpets, draperies, and embroideries continued to be developed throughout the period, and rich materials were produced by the manufacturers. The art of painting, likewise, made great progress during this period, and the skillful use of colours contributed greatly to refine the æsthetic sense of the people. Native tradition mentions Mani as the great painter, and Farhad, immortalized by Nizami, as the great sculptor of the Sasanian

period. Recent finds in Turkestan show to what extent the art of painting had advanced among the followers of the painter-prophet Mani. We learn from Masudi that the art of painting portraits had made a great progress during the period. It was the custom, says the writer, to prepare a portrait of every king before he died This was painted in liquid gold and silver, with sprinklings of copper fillings, and was deposited in the royal treasury.[10]

The art of cutting dies for coins, begun by the Achaemenians, was continued throughout the Sasanian period In their general workmanship, the coins are thin, round pieces, roughly executed, and are crude as works of art The effigies on several coins, as also the inscriptions, are distinct and legible The coins have generally a single or double pearl bordering, sometimes with three or four crescent and stars outside the border. Within the circle is always the effigy of a king, usually alone, though occasionally, as for example, on some of the coins of Artakhshir, there is found another effigy of a prince, facing the king.[11]

Artakhshir has on some of the early coins, besides his effigy on the front, a profile of his father on the reverse, with inscriptions bearing his name and title.[12] Some of the coins of Khusru Parviz have, in addition to the king's effigy on the obverse side, a figure of a woman presumably of his favourite queen Shirin, on the reverse.[13] Varahran II has the effigy of his wife placed on his left with a prince facing them in the front [14] Besides the usual effigy on the front of the coin, Noshirvan has, in some cases, his full-length figure in a standing posture, with both hands resting on the hilt of his sword, engraved on the reverse of the coins.[15] Pearl necklaces and ear-rings, with double or triple pendants, usually adorn the persons of the kings. The hairs of the head drop behind in curls or masses. The head of the profile on the coins of early days is covered with a diadem and a Parthian tiara. The coins of the later period, usually, show upon the king's head a low cap surmounted by a balloon-shaped covering, or by a mural crown, with or without the in-

[10] For ref see Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr Nariman, in JIA. 8 434, 435.
[11] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Oriental Monarchy*, p 67.
[12] *Ib.*, p. 65.
[13] *Ib.*, p. 532.
[14] *Ib.*, pp. 107, 108, n 5
[15] *Ib.*, p 453

flated ball at the top, and interposed, at times, by a crescent and a circle, or with a cap terminating in the head of an eagle or a bull. Other variations are found occasionally. One star or several stars, and a crescent, in front, or above the crown, or on either side of it, are sometimes seen. The name of the king, inscribed on each coin, is always accompanied by some of his important titles as the King of Kings, the King of Iran, the Divine. The regnal years of the king show the particular year of his reign in which the coin was struck, as the mint marks show the town from which it was issued. Fire, the sacred symbol of Zoroastrianism, is always conspicuous on the reverse of the coins, where it is depicted on the altar in rising flames, with one man in full length figure on either side, guarding the eternal emblem.

## CHAPTER LIV

## MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Demoniac origin of diseases.** Despite the growth of knowledge of bodily ailments, the ancient belief of looking to Ahriman as the prime originator of diseases, that we saw prevailing in the Kianian period, still persisted among the Sasanians. The writers of this period load the enemy of man with the responsibility of originating human illness,[1] though they fully recognize the fact, that several diseases originate from unsanitary and intemperate habits.

Consequently, the most efficacious remedy for a disease of malignant nature, which physicians or surgeons have been unable to cure by medicine or operation, is said to be the priestly recital of the sacred spells by a priest to drive it away.[2] As the recital of religious formulas and the invocation of supernatural help are ultimately the best remedies, it is declared to be the duty of the supreme High Priest of the country to direct and control the work of the members of the medical profession.[3]

**Classification of diseases.** The number of diseases with which the Evil Spirit has plagued the body of man is said to be 4333, of which only nine, however, are mentioned by name.[4] Diseases are divided among those that appear on the surface of the body, and those that affect man's health inwardly.[5] Cold and heat, stench and dirt, hunger and thirst, anxiety and old age are the main causes of natural diseases.[6] Besides these, there are the diseases which originate from intemperate habits and indulgence in evil passions.[7] The harmonious working of the four elements, fire, water, air, and earth in the body of man

[1] Dk., vol. 4, pp. 222, 233, 238, 239; vol. 12, bk. 6 308, pp. 24, 25.
[2] Dk., vol. 4, pp 223, 224.
[3] *Ib*., p. 225
[4] *Ib*., p 234.
[5] *Ib*., p. 234.
[6] *Ib*., p. 233.
[7] *Ib*., p. 233.

through the food and drink that he takes, conduces to vigour and health of the body.[8] Care is to be taken to preserve and augment the purity and vitality of blood, which embellishes the body like an ornament.[9]

**Physical cures.** There are two kinds of physicians of the body. The duty of the physician of the first class, who is called *durustpat* or the master of the health, is to remove the causes that give rise to the diseases The physician of the second class, known as *tan beshazak*, or the healer of body, does the work of healing, by means of medicine.[10] Physicians were chiefly drawn from the priestly class, but qualified persons from the class of agriculturists, experienced in the medicinal qualities of herbs and plants, were eligible to the medical profession.[11] Physicians for the royal household were often drawn from foreign countries. When Justinian concluded a truce with Noshirvan, he lent him the services of a Greek physician, in addition to paying him two thousands pounds of gold, as the price of the truce.[12]

If proper care is not taken to cure a person of his disease in time, it is likely to spread to other parts of the body, and may occasionally result in death.[13] It is held to be the duty of the rulers to found hospitals in important centres, to provide them with medicines, and to appoint a physician to attend patients who come seeking health.[14]

The chief cures of the body are stated to be those by means of fire, herbs, surgical instruments, and acids[15] Medicine is mostly prepared from herbs and plants.[16] Ormazd has filled the earth with medicinal herbs and plants for the good of mankind.[17] Medicines could be inhaled, as well as drunk, with good effect Certain diseases of the skin could be cured by fumigating the body with herbs and plants Wounds, boils, tumours, and various similar diseases, require that the diseased part should

[8] *Ib*, pp. 238-240
[9] *Ib*, pp 238, 239
[10] *Ib*, pp. 223, 225
[11] *Ib*, pp. 232, 233.
[12] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p 404; cf. Wigram, *History of the Assyrian Church*, pp. 210, 212, 250, 253, London, 1910.
[13] Dk, vol 2, p. 68.
[14] Dk., vol 1, p. 42
[15] Dk., vol 4, p 223
[16] Dk., vol. 4, p 234; vol 9, p. 587
[17] Bd 9 4; 27 2.

first be treated with surgical instruments, after which medical solutions should be administered.[18]

**Professional qualifications.** In common with his professional brother of the Kianian period, the candidate who aspired to act as a healer, had to prove his skill by practising his art of healing three times on the body of a non-Zoroastrian. If he failed in all successive attempts to cure him, he was deemed unfit to practise thereafter, either medicine or surgery.[19] The first indispensable qualification of a physician, who embraces the profession is, we are told, that he should have studied well the science of medicine.[20] A good physician, we are informed, is the man who has read much, and remembers much, of medical subjects, who has great experience of his profession, who hears the case of his patient with calmness, who is painstaking in diagnosing the disease of his patient, who knows the various bodily organs and understands their functions, who conscientiously treats his patient, who is sweet-tongued, gentle, friendly, zealous of the honour of his profession, averse to protracting the disease for greed of money, and who is God-fearing.[21] An ideal healer heals for the sake of healing: he is the best among healers. The second in rank in the profession is he who practises his art, actuated by the desire for reward and renown of this world. The third in the point of honour, works both for the sake of merit and for money, but gives preference to the first. The fourth in position of nobility in his profession is the physician, who rates money higher than merit; but the lowest in the scale is the greedy and heartless physician, who dishonours his noble profession.[22] The duty of a conscientious physician is to watch carefully the effect of the medicine that he prescribes to his patient from day to day, to change and try a still better drug than the one he has already given, to visit the invalid daily at a fixed hour, to labour zealously to cure him, and to combat the disease of his patient, as if it were his own enemy.[23]

**Remuneration of the medical practitioners.** Having secured a good physician to heal their sick, it is the duty of the

[18] Dk., vol. 4, p 224.
[19] Dk., vol. 4, pp 229, 230; vol 6, pp. 375, 376.
[20] Dk., vol. 4, p. 221.
[21] *Ib.*, pp. 226, 227.
[22] *Ib.*, pp. 231, 232.
[23] *Ib.*, p. 230.

people among whom he practises, to see that he is not hampered properly appreciated. A good physician, we are told, should be provided with an income that would enable him to live in a house situated in a prominent locality, and furnished with necessary furniture. He should have wholesome food, sufficient dress, and swift horses. At least one swift horse is indispensable for him, for without it, it is said, he cannot visit his patients who live far from his home. Similarly, he should be well-equipped with a sufficient quantity of medicines and surgical instruments.[24]

**Sanitation.** The Zoroastrian ideal of the perfection of both the body and soul, which we had discussed in our treatment of the sanitary principles observed during the Kianian period, is maintained by Sasanian writers with unabated zeal. An injury to the body is regarded as an injury to the soul. Healthy body and healthy soul go together,[25] and the soul is not considered secure, unless it is housed in a healthy body.[26] The laws laid down in the Vendidad for bodily cleanliness, still remain the standard hygienic code, and the one task with which the writers of this period busy themselves is to interpret these laws in commentaries and glosses, and to elaborate them by means of dissertations.

Following the regulations of the Vendidad regarding the purity of the elements, the Sasanian writers declare it to be the duty of the rulers to prevent men, by means of legislation, from polluting fire, water, earth, and air, so that the people may be saved from pestilential diseases.[27] Diseases, we are informed, originate by bringing contamination to the elements; on the other hand, salubrity and health result, when all putrefying matter, which spreads poisonous gases, are carefully removed.[28] When filth and decaying matter mix with water, and give rise to stench, the contamination spreads through the atmosphere, by means of heat and moisture, and breed infectious diseases.[29] Hence preservation of the elements from impurity and a strict observance of bodily cleanliness, are the essential requirements for public health.[30] Man is advised to avoid contact with all kinds of

[24] *Ib.*, pp. 230-232
[25] Dk., vol. 6, p. 395.
[26] Dk., vol. 9, p. 599.
[27] Dk., vol. 1, p. 42.
[28] Dk, vol. 5, pp 283, 284.
[29] *Ib.*, pp. 290, 291.
[30] *Ib.*, p. 291.

decaying matter,[31] and to remove dirt and dung of his poultry and cattle far from his house.[32] The body is to be kept clean by bathing, and clothes are to be frequently washed to remove all impurities.[33] Special care is to be taken to keep the water clean,[34] and impure water is neither to be drunk, nor used for bathing purposes.[35]

As in earlier days, the greatest pollution is believed to be caused by the corpses of the dead. The rules prescribed in the Vendidad are most scrupulously observed during this period. One is asked to guard himself from touching a corpse, and to refrain from touching him who has come in contact with the dead.[36] But if a man happens to be defiled by the contact with a corpse, he is asked to abstain from spreading defilement to others, and to seek purification for himself by ceremonial ablution with bull's urine and water.[37] The corpse-bearers, it is noted by a foreign visitor of the period, lived outside the cities, and took precautions to warn the people by sounding bells, when they entered a city or went to a market place.[38] We have seen how the Vendidad explained the various degrees of defilement that reaches different objects in accordance with their liquid or solid state. The list of such objects is considerably enlarged by the Sasanian writers on sanitation, who explain, at great length, the process of cleansing several animate and inanimate objects, and give a list of things which, owing to their liquid or porous character, can never be cleansed, and acquaint us with the opinions of learned doctors who happened to differ on the subject.[39]

[31] *Dk*, vol 6, p. 384.
[32] Dk., vol 7, p 437
[33] Dk, vol 9, p. 634.
[34] *Ib.*, p. 646
[35] *Ib*, p. 647.
[36] SIS. 2 60; Dk., vol. 9, p. 648, vol 10, bk. 6 52, p. 15.
[37] Dk., vol 9, pp. 632, 633; vol 10, bk 5 30, p. 24.
[38] Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 250, Bombay, 1908.
[39] SIS. 2.

# CHAPTER LV

## COMMERCE

**The Sasanians were not a commercial race.** Commerce was not valued as highly as agriculture among the people. The Sasanian kings realized their ambition of reviving the great empire of their Achaemenian forebears, and succeeded, in the zenith of their power, in extending their sway from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Ægean and the Nile. The Iranian merchants could have carried on an extensive commerce with these distant lands. The Babylon-Ecbatana and other great land routes traversed the interior of Persia. The roads and bridges were kept in constant repair. Garrisons, stationed at various intervals, guarded the safety of the travellers,[1] and protected caravans from the assaults of brigands and highwaymen.[2] Not far from the seat of their power, flowed the Euphrates, navigable by small vessels; the Tigris, with its navigable course extending over a thousand miles, fed by several tributaries, and augmented by the rains of winter. The river Karun, and the seaboard of the Persian Gulf in the south, provided other avenues of commerce, and vessels freighted with merchandise plied these waters. The chief arteries of commerce by land and water maintained an extensive commercial activity, but the commerce was mostly in the hands of the Jews and Armenians, who flourished in Persia in large numbers. In addition to these people, the many Roman captives, established by the Sasanian kings in separate settlements, as also Hindus, who are reported by Hiuen Tsang to be living in the chief cities of the country,[3] must have plied their trades in Persia.

Naturally enough, the Pahlavi works of the period, with the exception of some meagre information, do not enlighten us regarding commerce in their days. We gather from the Dadistan-i Denik that it was lawful for a merchant to sell his ordinary

[1] Mirkhond, tr. Silvestre de Sacy, pp. 363, 364.
[2] Sg. 4. 25.
[3] Mookerji, *Indian Shipping*, p. 169, London, 1912.

ware at a profit, but corn, medicine and other articles, necessary for the maintenance of life, were not allowed to be sold at inflated prices. It was deemed proper to store corn and other edible goods, as a precaution against the time of scarcity, but a merchant who filled his warehouse in a time of plenty and cheap prices, with the sole object of making undue profits when crops failed, who raised his prices when corn was not sufficient for the inhabitants of a place, and who refused to sell at reasonable rates, even if the stock rotted in his storehouse, and thereby caused misery to the poor, was guilty of crime amenable to punishment.[4] Those whose business was to sell wine were enjoined to sell it to such people and in such quantity that although they might make fair profits from sales, drunkenness and vice would not originate among their customers. It was wrong to sell wine to foreigners, infidels and others, who, under the intoxicating influence of drink, were likely to cause disturbance.[5] Men are admonished never to be dishonest in their dealings with their customers, and Viraf warns them in vivid pictures of the unfortunates who were made to weigh and devour dust and ashes in hell, because, in this world, they used false weights, mixed water with wine, dust with grain, and otherwise cheated their customers.[6]

**The Sasanian currency.** We have already discussed the artistic value of the coins bearing the effigies of the Sasanian kings reigning when they were struck. Coined silver and gold money were in circulation, but we have very little information regarding the fixed standard of coined money, which must have prevailed at the time. The silver coin, most frequently mentioned in the Pahlavi works, is called *juju* or *dirham*, which weighed probably about sixty-three grains.[7] A smaller coin, whose value was one-fourth that of a *juju* or *dirham*, was called *mad* or *dāng*.[8] Four of the *juju* or *dirham* coins made a *stir*. We do not know the names of silver coins, higher in value than a *stir*. A gold coin called *dinār* seems to have been in circulation from very early times, as it is mentioned in connec-

[4] Dd. 49. 1-10.
[5] Dd. 50. 1-4.
[6] AV. 27; 67; 80.
[7] For general information about the Sasanian coins, see Mordtmann, *Zur Pehlevi-Münzkunde*, in ZDMG. 33. 82-142; 34. 1-162.
[8] Sd. 11. 7; 64. 5.

tion with the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, in the Pahlavi work which records his exploits.[9] The Pahlavi-Pazand wedding hymn recited to this very day, speaks of this gold coin as of the Nishapur currency.

**Weights.** The extant texts do not furnish a complete list of the weights in use for weighing commodities. Some of the names of the coins that we have noticed above are likewise applied to designate certain weights. For example, the smallest coin called *mad* is also a small weight, and, after the analogy of the coin of the same name, is one-fourth the weight of a *juju* or *dirham*.[10] The *juju* or *dirham*, as stated above, is also the name of a coin. Four of these weights made the weight spoken of as a *stir*,[11] which is likewise the name of a coin. It is interesting to note, that in the Pahlavi texts, the names of these weights occur in a few instances only, in passages referring to commercial transactions. They are more often employed to designate the different degrees of sin to which specific weights are applied. According to the writings of the period, Rashn, the judge, stands at the Bridge of Judgment, holding a golden balance in his hands to weigh the good and evil deeds of the souls that leave this world after death.[12] A scale of weights is therefore fixed, and a certain weight is assigned to each sinful act. It is said that the weight of just one filament more of the hair of the eyelashes, of the merit or sin of a soul, determines its fate for heaven or hell.[13]

**Measures of distance.** The scale for measuring distances remains the same as prevailed in the earlier period. A step or foot, as we have seen, constituted the unit of length according to the Avestan texts. Three such steps constituted a pace,[14] which served to measure small distances.[15] By far the most commonly mentioned measures in the Pahlavi texts are the *hāsar* and *parasang*, the latter being still in use in modern Persia under the name *farsakh*. The two measures are often confused with each other. At times both are taken to represent one and the same distance.[16] In another instance, it is said that it requires four *hāsars* to make a *parasang*.[17] The *hāsar*, we are informed,

[9] KrNArtP. 8. 2, 4.
[10] SIS. 10. 24.
[11] Sd. 12. 9.
[12] AV. 5. 5.
[13] Sd. 2. 3, 4.
[14] Dk., vol. 9, pp. 644, 645.
[15] Dk., vol. 1, pp. 17, 18.
[16] Bd. 14. 4.
[17] Bd. 16 7.

measures a thousand steps of the two feet, and a *parasang* covers as great a distance as a man with powerful eyes can discern an animal far in the wilderness, so as to distinguish its colour, whether black or white.[18] An important Pahlavi work incidentally gives some idea of the length of a *parasang*. Speaking about the horses which carried Artakhshir and his companion, when he fled from the court of Artaban, the text says that the horses were such as could run a distance of seventy parasangs a day.[19] According to this statement, a parasang, in the author's days, could not be very much more than a mile. Commenting upon the statement of the Avestan Yasht in honour of Ardvi Sura, that every one of her channels is so long that a good rider requires fully forty days to make the circuit on horseback, the Pahlavi texts add, by way of explanation, that the length of each such channel is from seventeen hundred to nineteen hundred parasangs, and state that a parasang is at least twenty thousand feet.[20] This shows the length of a parasang to be more than three miles. The measure, it is to be noted, varied greatly at different places. In addition to designating distances by technical names, it is often customary to state that certain distances are as great as a man could cover at a swift pace from dawn to sunset.[21]

**Lineal and quantitative measures.** The breadth of a finger seems to be the smallest lineal measure, and small objects are frequently measured by the breadth of a certain number of fingers. Eight to twelve finger-breadths make a span of varying length and eight medium spans constitute the height of a man.[22] Great heights are designated by comparing an object to the height of one or a hundred or a thousand men.[23] Similarly, the length of a javelin is used to measure the length, breadth, and height of objects.[24] A measure of about five steps in length, called the *nāc* or reed, is mentioned by the texts.[25] The closeness of one another of the souls in hell is expressed by saying

[18] Bd. 26 2.
[19] KrNArtP. 2 14, 3. 10, 16, 18; 5. 7.
[20] Bd. 13. 2; Zsp. 6 8
[21] Bd. 18. 7.
[22] Bd. 26. 3.
[23] Bd. 7. 5; 12. 5, 7; 13. 5.
[24] SlS. 2. 10; 9. 12; Dd. 21. 5; AV. 5. 1.
[25] Dd. 21. 3, 5; 43. 5.

that they are as close to one another as the ear is to the eye.[26] The size of a needle's point or the breadth of a hair are the expressions used to denote the minutest space.[27] A hundred thousand or nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine myriads are the highest numbers spoken of in the texts,[28] and an indefinitely large number is denoted by comparing the intended number to the leaves of the trees, to the sand-grains of the desert, to the drops of rain,[29] or to the hairs on the mane of a horse.[30] Of the size of a bowl, or of the head of a bull or of a man [31] are some of the expressions used indefinitely to denote the square dimensions of an object, as the terms handfuls, armfuls, and bucketfuls are used to express cubic content.[32] A *kafiz*, a measure of weight, that holds sixty-four pounds weight, is mentioned in the texts.[33]

[26] AV. 54.
[27] Bd. 18. 6; Mkh. 2. 121.
[28] Bd. 9. 4; 13. 4; 18 10
[29] Sd. 8. 2.
[30] AV. 54, *The Symbolism of the Darun*, Phl. text ed. and tr. by. Jamasp Asa, in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, p 204, Bombay, 1918
[31] Bd. 7. 5, 11; Zsp. 6. 5, 12.
[32] Bd. 7. 11; AV. 27.
[33] Dd. 52. 1, 2; AV. 27.

## CHAPTER LVI

## CALENDAR

**The Pahlavi works upon the calendar.** The Sasanians make no improvement upon the uncouth method, inherited from their predecessors, of reckoning events from the years of a ruling king. The calendar remains the same as in the Kianian period, and the Pahlavi works elaborate and explain the details of its working. It is no part of our purpose to reproduce the story of the controversies that have raged around the questions of dates falling behind, owing to neglect of observing proper intercalation. We may note in passing, that a learned literature has appeared on the question among the Parsis during the last hundred years, particularly in the Gujarati language.

The Zoroastrian calendar, it is interesting to note, has greatly influenced the calendars of Armenia, Cappadocia, Albania, and other adjacent countries.[1]

**The seasons.** The two chief seasons of the year are shown as the summer of seven months and the winter of five months. The period of the summer, we are told, begins from the day Ormazd of the first month Farvardin, and extends to the thirtieth day Aniran of the seventh month Mihr. During this period, Rapitvin, the genius of warmth, comes up from below the ground and ripens the fruit of the trees. The water of springs becomes cold in summer, for Rapitvin is not at their source. The remaining five months, beginning from the day Ormazd of the eight month Aban and extending to the end of the five intercalary days, placed at the close of the twelfth month, Spandarmad, are of winter. Though the winter sets in at the beginning of the month Aban, it attains its full strength in the tenth month, Deh, and we are informed that it was the custom among the people to kindle fires everywhere on the ninth day, Adar, of this month, to mark the advent of winter. During the months of winter, it is said, the waters of springs and conduits remain

[1] See Gray, *Calendar (Persian)*, in ERE. 3. 130.

warm, because the warmth-giving Rapitvin is, at this period, under the earth.

The author of the Bundahishn compares the climate of his country with that of India, and says that, both summer and winter are not very severe, because the rain which falls in torrents in summer dispels heat, and as the rain does not fall in winter, the cold season is mild. The writer seeks to imply by this contrast that, in his country, the rain does not fall in summer, hence the summer is very hot, and as in winter rain is frequent, the rigour of cold is increased.[2]

In explaining the seasons, according to the movements of the sun, it is said that, when the sun goes forth from the first degree, the season is the spring; when he enters the first degree of Cancer, it is the beginning of summer; when he arrives at the sign of Libra, it is the beginning of autumn; and when he comes to Capricorn, it is the beginning of winter.[3]

When the division of the year into different seasons is described in detail, four distinct seasons are recorded. They are: *vahār*, 'spring,' *hāmin*, 'summer,' *pātīz*, 'autumn,' and *zamistān*, 'winter.' Each of the four seasons lasts for three months.[4] The six seasonal festivals, known as the *gāhānbārs*, are now described as the six periods of a year, during which Ormazd successively created the sky, the water, the earth, the plants, the animals, and finally mankind.[5]

**The year.** The New Year begins with the advent of the spring when nature robes herself in rich verdure. The end of the winter, according to the Dinkard, is the close of the year, also the particular occasion when the Guardian Spirits of the dead descend to earth, seeking commemoration from their living kinsmen.[6] The sun, it is said, requires three hundred and sixty-five days and six short hours, between two successive dates of entering the sign Aries.[7] As the year with its 360 days of twelve equal months together with the five intercalary days, was still a quarter of a day too short, this shortage, the Dinkard explains, reached the length of one full day in four years, of

[2] Bd. 25. 7, 10-15; cf. Dk., vol. 10, bk. 6 79, pp. 22, 23.
[3] Bd. 5. 6.
[4] Bd. 25. 20; Mkh. 49. 26; Dk., vol. 9, p. 565.
[5] Bd. 1. 28; 25. 1.
[6] Dk., vol. 15, bk. 6. 11, 23, pp. 14-17.
[7] Bd. 25. 21.

ten days in forty years, of one month in 120 years, of five months in 600 years, and of one full year in 1440 years.[8]

The Dinkard speaks of two kinds of solar year. The one in use for common people, is of 365 days. The second, which may be termed ecclesiastical, is the year of 365 days and a quarter, and has reference to the seasons.[9]

**The month.** The year is primarily divided into twelve months of thirty days each,[10] and each of these months, is divided into four weeks, the first two of seven days, and the last two of eight. This, as we have seen, is accomplished by inserting a day sacred to Ormazd at the beginning of each of the four groups of days. Similarly, the month is divided into six periods of five days each, after the movements of the moon. According to the Pahlavi texts, the first period, called *andar māh* commences from the first and ends after the fifth day of the new moon; the second, *padire andar māh,* from the sixth to the tenth day; the third, *pur māh,* from the eleventh to the fifteenth; the fourth, *padire pur māh,* from the sixteenth to the twentieth day; the fifth, *vishaptath māh,* from twenty-first to the twenty-fifth day; and the sixth, *padire vishaptath māh,* commences from the twenty-sixth and lasts up to the thirtieth day. Of these six periods, the first, third, and fifth are considered auspicious, and in them all good works are to be undertaken. The remaining three groups are held to be inauspicious.[11]

**The day.** It is said that the day is to be reckoned before the night, because the night sets in after the passing away of the day.[12] The day in summer is twelve *hāsar* measures in length, a *hāsar* being equivalent to approximately one hour and twenty minutes.[13] The summer night is six *hāsars* long. In winter the night is twelve *hāsars,* and the day is six.[14] Thus the summer day is said to be equal to two of the shortest winter days, and the winter night is as much as two of the shortest nights in summer.[15] The night increases from the tenth day of the fourth month in the Medyoshem season festival until the twentieth day of the tenth month in the Medyarem festival. The day is the shortest on this last day. Similarly, the decrease of the night and the increase of the day, goes on from the Medyarem to the

[8] Dk., vol. 9, p 563.
[9] Dk., vol. 9, pp. 562-568.
[10] Dk., vol. 9, p. 641.
[11] Dk., vol. 6, pp. 405, 406.
[12] Bd 25. 2.
[13] See West, SBE. 5. 93, n. 4.
[14] Bd. 25. 5.
[15] Bd. 25. 4.

Medyoshem Gahanabar festival.[16] During the time of the intercalary days at the end of the twelfth month in the Hamaspmadem festival the day and night once again become equal.[17]

When the sun passes through the first degree, the day and night are equal; when he arrives at the first degree of Cancer, the day is the longest; when he comes to the sign of Libra, the day and night are equal; when he comes to Capricorn, the night is the longest; when he arrives at Aries, the day and night are again equal.[18]

The day, we had seen, was divided into five periods. The first of these is said to be between daybreak and mid-day; the second from mid-day to afternoon; the third from the afternoon to the appearance of the stars in the sky; the fourth from this time to midnight; and the fifth from midnight until the stars become imperceptible in the sky at dawn.[19] Unlike summer, in which the day has five watches, the winter day consists of only four. This is, as already stated, because the second period, between the mid-day and afternoon, is absorbed in the first watch.

[16] Bd. 25. 3. [17] Bd. 25. 6. [18] Bd. 5. 6. [19] Bd. 25. 9.

## CHAPTER LVII

## DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

**Dress.** The sacred white shirt, worn next to the skin, and the girdle tied over it, around the waist, are the chief garments,[1] without which, it is said, a man or a woman is not a true Zoroastrian.[2] The shirt is to be made of cotton, and not of silk, for, as is explained, cotton grows by the help of the elements of nature, and is, therefore, good for the soul, whereas silk is produced through the instrumentality of worms, which belong to the class of the noxious creatures, and things made of silk are, therefore, serviceable for the body only.[3] The girdle likewise should not be made of silk, but of cotton, of the hair of the goat, camel, and other animals.[4] White is the colour which continues to be regarded as the symbol of purity. Naturally, therefore, it is the colour most suitable for the garments of priests.[5] Red, on the other hand, is the colour that suits the uniform of the warrior chiefs.[6] Black and blue seem to be the colour, according to the Shah Namah, that the people wore, when mourning the death of a king.[7] Royalty was attired in the most magnificent dress made of the costliest materials. The figures on coins and bas-reliefs show the kings covering their heads with a tiara, a balloon-shaped cap, a low cap with an inflated ball at the top, or with caps surmounted by heads of birds and animals. Robes of rich materials, embroidered and painted in elegant colours, trousers of sky-blue colours, and red shoes were also proper to kings.[8] A costly mantle was often thrown over the shoulders, and a girdle studded with precious stones encircled the waist. Men of the poorer classes covered their bodies with

[1] Bd. 24. 22; Dk., vol. 9, p. 636
[2] Dk., vol. 6, p. 364; vol. 7, p. 481
[3] Nr., bk. 3. 1. 5; Mkh. 16. 64-66.
[4] Nr., bk. 3. 1. 11-13; SIS. 4. 1
[5] Dk., vol. 5, p. 297.
[6] Dk., vol. 5, p. 299.
[7] ShN. 7. 151.
[8] For ref. see Christensen, *L'Empire des Sasanides*, tr. Nariman, in JIA. 8. 435.

clothes, made of skin, hair, and cotton; whereas the wealthy wore woolen and silk garments, often embroidered with gold and silver.[9] Men covered their heads with a turban, and the feet with sandals or boots, laced in front.[10] Men of ordinary position generally wore a short coat, with a belt encircling the waist. According to the statement of a Chinese traveller, who visited Persia at this period, men cut their hair short, wore white fur caps and turbans, and shirts open at the top to admit the head.[11] The white robes in which the priests clothed themselves, extended to the feet. A pair of trousers, loose or closely fitting, covered the lower limbs.

The Pahlavi texts give no information about the costumes of women, and the archæological remains do not assist us in forming ideas on the subject. The Chinese historian, quoted above, speaking about the dress of the women of the Sasanian period, states that they wore loose shirts and cloaks, and arranged their hair into a coil in front, but left loose behind, and adorned themselves with gold and silver flowers, as also with strings of pearls, hanging down on the shoulders.[12] In his letter to the king of Tabaristan, Tansar speaks of the dress of the women of nobility, and depicts them as wearing silk gowns, boots, breeches, and caps.[13]

**Ornaments.** Ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, finger-rings, and anklets made of gold and studded with precious stones were the chief ornaments worn by both men and women of wealth.[14] Those of the poorer classes contented themselves with the use of jewels made of silver and other inferior metals. The sculptures that perpetuate the figures of kings in stone, show them wearing ear-rings and necklaces with one, two, or three pendants attached to them. A lavish use of gold and precious stones was usual with the king, to produce the effect of dazzling splendour. His tiara and diadem were often made of gold, studded with priceless gems.

[9] SIS. 2. 99; 4 4; Dk., vol. 5, p. 299.
[10] SIS. 10. 12; Sd. 87. 3.
[11] *Hori, A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 248, Bombay, 1908.
[12] *Ib.* p. 248.
[13] Darmesteter, *Alleged Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, I. p 531.
[14] SIS. 3. 4; Dk., vol. 8, p. 435.

## CHAPTER LVIII

## DOMESTIC ANIMALS

**The cattle.** We have seen that oxen, cows, sheep, goats, dogs, horses, camels, and poultry were the chief domesticated animals of the Avestan people. They formed also the most valuable assets of the people during this period. The cows fed human mouths with their priceless product; the oxen drew the ploughs, and carried water in skins; the camels carried merchandise to great distances and provisions to the battlefields, and yielded hair for making coarse cloth; the goats and sheep produced wool for garments.

**The dog.** Of all the animals useful to man in his life upon the earth, the dog, as we had observed, was assigned a sacred character, and played a prominent part in the religious life of the people. He preserved this trait during the period under discussion, and remained the most honoured animal until the fall of the Sasanian Empire. He lost his prestige with the advent of the Moslem conquerors, to whom he was an unclean animal. A later Pahlavi treatise enjoins that, at every meal, one should set apart three morsels for the dog; should feed him three times a day in summer, and twice in winter; should not beat him, nor walk with heavy steps to disturb him, when he is asleep.[1] In return for the food that man gave him, and the care which he bestowed upon him, his faithful companion, the dog, guarded the inmates of the house and the cattle on the farm.[1a] Sleepless at night, he moved around the household yard, and kept a vigilant watch. Early in the morning, he left the farm with cowherds, walked in front of the flock to protect it from thieves and wolves,[2] watched the herds browsing on the hills, and led the cattle home in the evening. Without the watching care of the dog, it is said, the flock of sheep would not be safe.[3] As a favourite companion of man, the dog was to be seen in the king's palace as much as in the cottage of a farmer. It was the

[1] Sd. 31. 1-5.
[1a] Sd. 31. 6, 7.
[2] Dk., vol. 8, p. 450.
[3] Bd. 14. 29.

pet dog of King Artakhshir that lapped the poisoned milk dropping from the cup placed in the royal hands, by his faithless consort, and died.[4] Dogs trained to the chase accompanied the king and the nobles on their hunting excursions.

In addition to this inseparable companion of man it seems that the cat also figured among the domestic animals. Persia is noted for her beautiful breed of cats, even at the present day. King Artakhshir, we gather from the narration of the above incident, had near him his pet cat, which amused him by its pleasant tricks. When the fatal cup, intended to take his life fell from his hands, the cat perished along with the dog by lapping its contents.[5]

**The horse.** This noble animal keeps up his reputation which he had secured for himself in Ancient Iran. He is still used among the Sasanians for riding in times of peace, and for drawing chariots, and carrying warriors in the time of war. Great care was taken to rear the finest breed of horses, and the studs of the kings, governors, and noblemen were composed of horses of various breeds. The master of the stable, who superintended the royal stable, was always a person of distinction. The horse figures prominently on the sculptures in different poses. The horses of Arab blood seem to have been prized most highly. The Dinkard informs us that native born horses do not compare well with the pure Arab, and horses foaled by fleet Arab horses, out of native dams, do not run like the Arab.[6]

**The elephant.** Another noble animal which filled an important place in times of peace, as well as in war, was the elephant. The animal was not indigenous to Persia, and was obtained mostly from India. The king rode on an elephant on state occasions, and princes and nobles who accompanied him in the royal procession, also mounted on elephants. The white elephant seems to have been regarded as of an auspicious nature. The founder of the Sasanian Empire was seen in a dream by the last of the Parthians, seated on a white elephant and receiving the homage of the people, and the interpreters of the dream foretold the downfall of the Parthian Empire and the rise of a new kingdom, with the rider of the elephant for its first king.[7] Elephants were employed to drive game to an enclosed place,

[4] KrNArtP. 9. 13.
[5] *Ib.*
[6] Dk., vol. 2, p. 95.
[7] KrNArtP. 1. 10, 13.

when the king went hunting. Several elephants, with their riders are seen sculptured in the hunting scenes of Khusru Parviz, carved at Tak-i Bostan, near Kermanshah. Of their use on the battlefield, we have already spoken in earlier pages.

**The birds.** The cock, so sacred to the Avestan people, retained his holy character.[8] Among the birds, the eagle represented the national glory, and stood as an emblem of greatness and power.[9] The falcon was trained to catch the feathered game.

[8] Sd. 32. 1-6; 34. 3.

[9] KrNArtP. 3. 10-20

## CHAPTER LIX

## FOOD AND DRINK

**The chief articles of diet.** The human soul requires a healthy and strong body, in order to live its strenuous life upon the earth. Wholesome food is the first essential to prevent the body from languishing, and to give it the necessary strength.[1] Fasting, we had seen, never found a place in the religious life of the early Iranians. It is reprobated with undiminishing opposition among the Sasanians. It is a sin to fast from food, but, so the moralists add, the one fast enjoined by the prophet is the fast from sin.[2] The usual diet of the people consisted of milk, butter, vegetables, fruits, grain, meat, eggs, fowls, and fish.[2a] Roasted lambs and fowls were served whole at feasts, as among the Achaemenians, and as is still done in Persia.[3] The best of food which is served in heaven as ambrosia after the analogy of the Avestan teachings, is the midspring butter.[4] The chief of grains, according to the writers of the period, is wheat.[5] Dates and grapes are declared to be best of fruits.[6] Meat of goats and sheep formed an ordinary article of food.[7] Meat viands were served at sacred feasts, animals were slaughtered for the purpose, in accordance with specified rules, and various parts ceremoniously dedicated to several heavenly beings, before being used as food by man.[8] The custom of the abstention from animal food for the first three days after the death of a relative, arose from the superstitious dread that another death might occur if meat was partaken of during the prohibited period.[9] On the fourth day, it is stated, that a goat or a sheep may be slaughtered.[10]

**The use of wine.** People habitually drank wine with their

[1] Dk., vol. 7, pp. 460, 461.
[2] Sd. 83. 1-6.
[2a] Cf. Unvala, *The Pahlavi text King Husrav and his boy*, 21-53.
[3] ShN. 6. 238.
[4] Mkh. 2. 152, 156.
[5] Nr., bk. 1. 8. App. A. 2; Bd. 24, 19, Mkh. 16. 13-15.
[6] Mkh. 16. 16.
[7] Dk, vol. 6, p. 384; vol. 7, p. 437.
[8] SIS. 11. 4; Sd. 34. 4-6; *Pazand texts*, ed. Antia, p. 178, Bombay, 1909.
[9] SIS. 17. 2; Sd. 78. 1.
[10] SIS. 17. 5.

meals, as well as on all festive occasions.[10a] Wine was made in the season, and stored in jars.[11] Old wine was considered to be mellower and better to drink.[12] A Pahlavi work expatiates on the benefits derived from the moderate drinking of wine. It is alleged that the use of wine in moderation is helpful for digestion, increases vitality and the vigour of body and mind, augments the memory, improves the eyesight and the hearing, improves the speaking of the tongue, and induces pleasant sleep and freshness of spirit.[13] It is only when a man drinks to intoxication, and is addicted to heavy indulgence in drinking, that he brings harm to both body and mind.[14] When a man of good nature takes to moderate drinking, it is said, he becomes more diligent in work, more devout and charitable, and more kind and gentle to his wife, children, and friends, in the same manner, as a golden or silver goblet turns purer and brighter, when it is placed in fire. On the contrary, when a man of bad disposition joins in a drinking bout, and sinks into a state of wretchedness, he exhibits his bad qualities, and is a source of misery to his family.[15] The man who sells wine to such a habituated drunkard, is to be considered guilty of evil doing.[16]

Wine was also used as an article of offering in rituals,[17] and the consecrated liquid was drunk.[18] It is laid down that if the officiating priest finds out that he cannot bear the quantity of wine that he is authorized to drink, and is so put out by the intoxication caused by the drink, that he is unable to proceed with the performance of the ceremony, he is to be pardoned his weakness. But, if after knowing his inability to consume the appointed quantity, he does not diminish the draught, and drinks until he becomes intoxicated, in the midst of the ritual, he is guilty of a serious offense.[19]

The Shah Namah is full of instances in which kings, nobles, and warriors indulge in drinking wine at banquets, on the hunting ground, and on various other occasions.

[10a] On different kinds of wine, see Unvala, *op. cit.* 57, 58.
[11] Phl. Vd. 6. 5; SlS. 2. 30, 31.
[12] AnAtM. 100.
[13] Mkh. 16. 37-48.
[14] Mkh. 16. 49-63; Dk., vol. 1, pp 3, 4; AnAtM. 111.
[15] Dd. 51. 5, 6; Mkh. 16. 25-35; Dk., vol. 13, bk. 6. E. 11, pp. 3, 4.
[16] Dd. 51. 4.
[17] Nr., bk. 1. 8 App. B. 3.
[18] Nr., bk. 1. 8. App. C. 15; bk. 2, 16, 4.
[19] Nr., bk. 1. 9. 1-5; cf. Dd. 51. 7. 8.

## CHAPTER LX

## FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

**Occasions for festivities.** The feasts and festivals which were sacred to the Iranians from early times continued to be celebrated with unabated zeal among the Sasanians. The seasonal festivals, the national festivals, the festivals of the elements of nature, and the festivals of the dead were all solemnly observed. The tendency, in the case of such important festivals, as the New Year's Day and the feast of Mihr, was to lengthen the period of festivities. Such festivals commenced a few days before the actual feast day, and continued until several days thereafter. Albiruni states that the king announced by proclamation his royal will to award the services of his loyal subjects on New Year's Day, and to give audiences, for the following five days, successively, to men of nobility, to warriors and high priests, to members of the royal family, relatives, and domestics, and on the fifth day to the royal children. On the sixth day he converged with his confidential advisers, examined the presents placed at his feet by his grateful subjects, selected the choicest gifts for the royal treasury, and showered gifts upon those whom he was pleased to honour.[1] According to another account, the king entertained his subjects at a banquet, with music and various amusements to add to the gaiety of the occasion.[2] On the festival of Mihrgan, we are informed, that a fair was held by the people, and the king donned a crown, bearing an image of the sun, with the wheel on which he rotates.[3] The feast, we are further told, grew so greatly in importance that the festivities in later periods lasted for thirty days.[4] On the great festival days, the streets were gay with people arrayed in festal attire, spending their time visiting relatives and friends, in amus-

[1] Albiruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, tr. Sachau, pp. 203, 204, London, 1879.
[2] Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 250, Bombay, 1908
[3] Albiruni, *op. cit*, p. 207.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 209.

ing themselves with games and athletic sports, and in general rejoicing and feasting.

In addition to the feasts and festivals that the Sasanians had inherited from their predecessors, there were others that they had established to commemorate events of national importance. For example, we learn from Albiruni, that a dreadful drought visited the country in the reign of King Piroz, and laid waste the country for seven years. The king took all possible measures to fight the scourge, and repaired to the famous fire-temple to invoke Ormazd to relieve his subjects from the great famine. The prayers of the royal supplicant were heard and, we are told, clouds laden with water began to gather over the head of the king, when he left the sacred precincts, and poured down their rain in such torrents that the fertilizing waters soon brought back prosperity to the country. The king, thereupon, inaugurated a feast to perpetuate the memory of this event.[5]

[5] *Ib.*, p. 215.

## CHAPTER LXI

## AMUSEMENTS

**The outdoor games.** The information on this subject that we glean from existing records is chiefly limited to the kind of games and sports indulged in by kings and princes, nobility and men of the upper classes. We are not acquainted with the amusements which lightened the drudgery of life among the common people. Some games which entailed no great expenditure, such as running and wrestling, and similar exercises which gave diversion, must have been the pastimes of the masses. Swimming in the waters of the rivers, lakes, and seas must have been indulged in by the people, and Adarbad cautions the intrepid swimmer not to venture too often in violent waters, lest one day the waters might overcome him.[1] The race-course and polo ground were the chief resorts of the wealthy, who could maintain horses of fine breed for the purpose. Horse racing and the playing of polo formed part of the training of princes and the sons of noblemen, who were daily taken to the field for the purpose.[2]

**Kings, nobles, and warriors much given to chase.** The Sasanians had inherited the love of chase from their forebears. Of all the sports, the chase was one which was most frequently indulged in by the king, in company with his courtiers. It was considered a great accomplishment in a youth to be a good hunter, and princes were taken to the hunting-ground every day for instruction in hunting.[3] When prince Artakhshir, destined to be the founder of the last Zoroastrian Empire, so dexterously shot a wild ass, that the arrow pierced the belly of the animal and came out from the other side, he aroused the jealousy of the princes of his royal host and patron, Artaban, and incurred his disfavour.[4] When the country was at peace with its neighbours, and the king was in the capital, he sought to relieve himself from the fatigue of state affairs by starting on hunting expeditions.

[1] AnAtM. 113.
[2] KrNArtP. 1. 28, 39; 13. 2, 3, 5, 7.
[3] KrNArtP. 1. 28.
[4] *Ib.*, 1. 32-39.

Such royal excursions were often arranged on a vast scale, and continued to several days. According to the Shah Namah, hounds, cheetahs, hawks, and falcons were specially trained to catch the game, and were usually taken to the hunt. Accompanied by his courtiers and warrior chiefs, and followed by a large train of attendants, the king went to the forests, stocked with the game, hunted lions and tigers, boars and wild asses, stags and antelopes, and returned after several days of hunting, proud of his achievements. The most daring sportsman and hunter-king, Bahram, nicknamed Gur or wild ass, from his fondness of hunting this animal, met with death by sinking in a morass while in pursuit of his game.[5] The king generally rode on horseback, when he went hunting, as we see Artakhshir pursuing wild asses on horseback and killing them.[6] Kings often hunted from the raised seats on elephant back.

We have already spoken of the hunting parks called paradises which were specially reserved for their pleasure by the Achaemenian kings. These flourished throughout the Sasanian period, and were the favourite places frequented by the kings, when they wished to hunt for short periods. The stag and boar hunting scenes which, as we have already seen, King Khusru Parviz perpetuates in stone at Tak-i Bustan, give a vivid picture of the men on elephants driving the game to the enclosures, where the king is seen, mounted on horseback, and on the alert, to discharge his arrows. The king's attendants, on foot and on horseback, help him in the chase, and a band of musicians are seen playing for the enlivenment of the occasion. In the boar hunt, the royal party is seated in boats, and the king is seen standing with his bow drawn for shooting. Hawking was another royal sport, and falcons trained for the purpose were employed to catch the game. An officer known as the Chief Falconer had the management of the royal chase in his charge.

**The indoor games.** The author of the memoir of the founder of the Sasanian Empire speaks of two games, called, respectively, Chatrang, literally 'four colours,' and Vin-i Artakhshir.[7] Other Pahlavi texts assign a later period to the origin of these games, and declare that they first came into

[5] Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 298, 299.
[6] KrNArtP. 10. 1-3.
[7] KrNArtP. 1. 30.

existence in the reign of King Noshirvan. An Indian king, tributary to the sovereign of Iran, according to the Pahlavi treatise, sends a game, called Chatrang, invented by his learned courtiers, with a challenge that if the learned men of Persia solved the game, the Persian king was entitled to the customary tribute, which the long train of camels and elephants had brought to his gates, but in the case of the failure to play the game, the Persian king should forego his claim to Indian tribute, and should bind himself to pay the same to the Indian king. The game was to be played on a chequered board of four colours, with sixteen diamond and sixteen ruby pieces arranged as at war with one another, in which one king, assisted by his minister, knight, and soldiers, attacked the other, similarly equipped. The game was, we are told, successfully played by the able minister of Noshirvan.[8]

The learned Persian minister now on his part, we are told, invented a game, and named it Vin-i Artakhshir, after the illustrious founder of the Sasanian Empire, and dispatched it to India, with a counter-challenge to explain the mystery of the Persian game, which, it is alleged, none could solve in India. The game was played on a board which stood for the earth, and with thirty pieces, fifteen white, which represented the days and fifteen black, which stood for as many nights. Of these several pieces, one was likened to Ormazd, two represented the celestial and terrestrial worlds, three reminded of the triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, four stood for the elements, air, earth, fire, and water, four represented the east, west, south, and north, five connoted the light of the sun, moon, planets, fire, and the heavens, and six corresponded to the six seasonal festivals. The movements of the pieces, which were forwards and backwards, were analogous to the movements of the seven planets and twelve constellations. The defeated pieces were to depart from the board, until the time when all had fallen, and a new game was to be commenced with the same pieces. This reminded one of the dead being made to rise on the Day of Resurrection.[9] We find no clue to the method of playing the game from the above statement, but it is evident that the Sasanian

[8] Sanjana, *Mādigānechatrang*, in *Ganje Shāyagān*, pp. 1-3, Bombay, 1885; Modi, *Firdousi's version of the Indian game of chess*, Bombay, 1896; Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 450, n. 2.

[9] *Ib.*, pp. 3, 4.

kings, and the people of their time, must have played it frequently, as a pastime for leisure hours. A Pahlavi treatise speaks of other games known to the Sasanians.[9a]

**Music.** The first Sasanian monarch is said to have made a sevenfold ministerial division, in which the musicians held the fifth place.[10] The Sasanians were a musical people, and musicians and players contributed greatly to the joy of life. Harps and minstrelsy formed a constant feature, according to the Shah Namah, in all royal movements. We learn from the account of the Chinese traveller, quoted above, that musicians played at the banquets and amused the guests.[11] The royal singers and players amused the king at the palace with their art, accompanied him to the battlefield, and joined him in his hunting expeditions. Bands of musicians are sculptured in the hunting scenes of Khusru Parviz at Tak-i Bostan. Men and women beguiled their weary hours with singing and playing upon the harp, flute, drum, or tambourine. Prince Artakhshir first attracted the attention of the maid of Artaban, when he was singing to the beat of the tambourine at the horse stall, at which he was condemned to serve by the Parthian king.[12] Lyre, guitar, zither, chang, vin and other musical instruments were in use among the people.[13]

The first rank among the sweet singers of the Sasanian Court is unanimously accorded by tradition to Barbad, the famous bard of the romantic king Khusru Parviz. Among his other compositions, he is said to have composed 360 special songs, of which he sang one, each night, to regale his royal master at his sumptuous banquets. The Sasanian minstrel's airs continued to be sung long after the downfall of the empire. Several of the names of Sasanian melodies are still preserved in Arabian literature.[14]

[9a] Unvala, *The Pahlavi text King Husrav and his boy*, 15, 16.
[10] Masudi, *Les Prairies d'Or*, tr. Barbier de Meynard, 2, 15, Paris, 1861-1877.
[11] Hori, *A Chinese Account of Persia in the Sixth Century*, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, p. 250, Bombay, 1908.
[12] KrNArtP. 2. 2.
[13] Unvala, *op. cit.* 13, 62, 63.
[14] Christensen, *Some Notes on Persian melody-names of the Sasanian period*, in *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, pp. 368-377, Bombay, 1918.

## CHAPTER LXII

## DIVINATION AND SORCERY

**Diviners and magicians.** In our treatment of the belief of the Kianians in the planetary influences on human life, we have seen that no important step was taken by them, without reference to the positions of stars. This tendency had now grown stronger, and people of all classes hesitated to undertake anything, before ascertaining the auspicious conjunctions of the planets. The court astrologers, as we have seen, were regarded with high honour and the king constantly sought their help. On certain special occasions the kings thought it necessary to consult noted astrologers of foreign countries, as King Artakhshir is said to have sent one of his chief courtiers to India to consult the famous diviners of that country.[1] The country was full of astrologers, who took the auspices for those who consulted them on important affairs, and reported to them whether they were favourable or not. It is said that an astrologer can predict future events in the life of a man by reading his horoscope, in the same manner, as a physician can speak of the health of a person by examining his body.[2] These readers of the stars drew up horoscopes, calculated nativities, foretold coming events, and in various other ways, consulted the heavens for their credulous clients. The common belief that permeated Iranian society, from the king to the farmer, was that all the good and evil that man experiences in this life are due mainly to the workings of the twelve good constellations and the seven evil planets.[3] The way which man travels in his journey upon this earth, is infested by these planetary brigands, who rob him of his happiness.[4] The finger of Fate writes its inexorable decree on man's forehead at his birth, and he enters the world forged in its fetters, which no earthly power, but Providence

[1] KrNArtP. 11. 4-7.
[2] Dk., vol. 9, p. 591.
[3] Mkh. 8. 17-19, 21
[4] Mkh. 8. 20; 12. 7-9; 38. 4, 5; Sg. 4. 9, 24-27.

alone, can break.[5] When Fate favours, the fool, it is said, becomes a wise man, the indolent turns into a diligent person, and the wicked shows signs of righteousness; but, in the face of the frowning Fate, the wise becomes a fool, the hero turns a coward, and the industrious becomes indolent.[6] A middle course is resorted to by those who, themselves believers in the power of Fate, yet cannot wholly discard the fact of the divine gift of free-will to man. They state that man should not, at all times, look to Fate with folded hands, but should strive to achieve his objects by work and effort. Fate and free-will, we are told, are like two loads carried by one animal, and the driver must always be on his guard to keep both of equal weight, to prevent a fall.[7] When a man exerts himself to obtain a certain thing, and obtains it, his exertion in this case is the means through which he gets it, but the efficient cause of his success in the attainment of his wish is Fate.[8] It is said that life, wife, child, power, and fortune are the special gifts of Fate to man.[9]

The dire consequences of such a fatalistic belief must have been felt occasionally by keen observers, and we find moralists sounding a warning to indolent persons who blamed Fate, when they had failed only from lack of effort and exertion.[10]

Sorcery continued to be held in abhorrence, as among the Kianians,[11] and the souls of those who practised this black art upon the earth were believed, according to Viraf, to be consigned to hell.[12]

[5] SIS. 20. 13, 17; Mkh. 24 3-8; 27. 11; Dk, vol. 12, bk. 6. A. 6, pp. 36, 37.

[6] Mkh. 23. 5-7; 27. 10; 47 7; 51. 5-7; Ibn Isfandiyar, *History of Tabaristan*, tr. Browne, pp. 85, 86, London, 1905.

[7] Darmesteter, *Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan*, in JA., 1894, 1. p. 553.

[8] Gs. 56, 57.

[9] Dd 71. 3; Dk., vol. 12, bk. 6. D. 1, p. 75; Jsp. p. 122.

[10] AnAtM. 119.

[11] For ref. see my *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 173.

[12] AV. 35.

## CHAPTER LXIII

## CONCLUSION

We have finished our survey of the progress of the Zoroastrian Civilization throughout the period during which Persia was under Zoroastrian rule. Thirteen centuries have now elapsed since the extinction of the Zoroastrian Empire, but the children of Ancient Iran still live upon this earth. They are the Parsis of India, and the Zoroastrian Iranians of Persia, and the noble blood of the early Kianians still courses in their veins. Although it is wide of our purpose to delineate, in detail, Zoroastrian life in modern times, it will be interesting to note, in brief, some of its salient features, to enable us to see how the racial characteristics of the ancient Persians have been translated into the life of their present-day descendants.

Since the dissolution of the empire in the seventh century, the community has passed through countless vicissitudes, sorrows, and tribulations. Vast numbers have, from time to time, exchanged Avesta for Koran, in order to escape social and political disabilities in their fatherland. A hundred thousand people in all now remain scattered among some sixteen hundred millions of human beings inhabiting the globe, and the appearance of a Zoroastrian, under such circumstances, is an event of great curiosity. History records nothing remotely like it. The Zoroastrians, still living in Persia, have remained stagnant, and almost in the same backward stage of culture as their ancestors in the dark period of the last thirteen centuries, and drag on an uneventful existence at the present day.

In India, the Parsis have attained prominence, far out of proportion to their insignificant numbers. They were the earliest among Oriental peoples to acquire a veneer of modern Western Civilization. Unlike the ancient Persians, who, as we had seen, looked to commercial pursuits with disfavour, the modern Parsis have taken to commerce and industry, and have amassed considerable wealth. The greatness of a community, however,

cannot be estimated in terms of its wealth alone. Material prosperity would prove a curse in disguise, if, along with it, the community failed to show any sign of that creative genius, which can find expression in literature and the arts, nourishing the imagination and animating the spirit of its members. Judged by this standard, we find that the Parsi community has not established its title to intellectual originality, since it planted its colony in India. No creative work of world-fame in literature or science stands to its credit. There is no real Parsi literature, and there exists no philosophy, work of art, drama, or music, distinctively Parsi in character. Parsi culture to-day is imitative and exotic. The name bearers of the ancient Persians, have, like them, remained receptive and imitative. The period of apprenticeship to the culture of their neighbours which began with their Achaemenian ancestors twenty-five centuries ago shows no sign of drawing to a close. When a community adopts the culture of a neighbour, and ceases, at the same time, to create anything of its own, it is bound to find, in the long run, that its soul becomes atrophied. It will be well for the Parsis, that they should bestir themselves to combat this evil which is hanging over their community.

Modern Parsis are enterprising and practical, virile and industrious, generous and benevolent. They are impulsive and not given to reflection, emotional and not intellectual. They are neither philosophical, nor rich in imagination. Talented as they are, they are not endowed with genius.

Internal dissensions, we have seen, formed one of the chief causes that contributed to the collapse of the Persian Empire. Modern Parsis, it seems, have not profited by the lessons of their past history, and are torn to-day by factions that undermine the solidarity of their community. Disintegrating forces have the community in their grip, and threaten to dissolve the bond of communal consciousness.

Let the Parsis emulate the good that the pages of their history furnish, and eliminate the evil that contributed to the downfall of the ancient empire, and their future will be as bright as their past has been great.

# INDEX

# INDEX

## A


*āberetar*, 123
ablutions, ceremonial, 163, 164
abortion, 112, 330
academy at Jund-i Shapur, 280, 306
Achaemenian, 209-213
Adarbad, 328
administration, 234-240, 317-320
Adoption, 71, 72
Adultery, 111, 112, 329, 330
Aerpatistan, 122
*aethra paiti* (Phl. *aerpat*), 83, 123, 332
*aethrya*, 83
Afghanistan, 21
*āfrinakān*, 89
*āgerepta*, 116
*agoyost*, 167
agriculture, 140-143, 158
*ahu*, 123
Ahuan, fortified stone structure at, 345
Ahura Mazda (Phl. Ormazd; Old Pers. Auramazda), sacrifices unto Vayu, 3
summons a conference of angels and men, 3
warns Yima of the coming deluge, 4
Ahuras, 17
Airyaman, 81
*airyaman*, one of the three social divisions, 64
invoked in the wedding hymn, 81
Airyana, 4
Airyana Vaejah, Ahura Mazda calls his conference of angels and men in, 3
Ahura Mazda sacrifices unto Vayu and Ardvi Sura in, 3, 22
cradle of the Aryans, 3
deadly winter introduced by Angra Mainyu in, 171
extension of its boundaries, 3
first land created by Ahura Mazda, 3
inundated with an icy deluge, 4
overflows with population, 3
persistence of its name, 22
Zarathushtra recites Ahuna Vairya in, 22
Airyana Vaejah, Zarathushtra, Haosravah, and Jamaspa sacrifice in, 22
*aiwi-gāma*, 171
*aiwisruthrima*, 172
Alexander burns the palace at Persepolis, 13, 40
defeats the armies of Darius III, 12
victor at Arbela, 213
Alphabet, Arabian, 282
Aramaic, 40, 210
Avestan, 39, 40
Modern Persian, 282
Pahlavi, 269, 279
ambassadors, 92, 93, 314
ambrosia, 187
amusements, 194, 195, 262, 263, 374-377
*andar māh*, 363
*andarzpat*, 276, 305
angling, 194
Angra Mainyu, created sorcery, 197
distressed by new births, 80
introduces imperfections in the world, 34
inundates Airyana Vaejah, 4
originates diseases, 351
animals, crimes against, 120, 121
domestic, 177-185, 367-369
noxious, 185, 186
anklets, 176, 366
Antioch, 342
Apam Napat, 183
Apaosha, assumes the form of a black horse, 175, 183
demon of drought, 18, 192, 193
*aperenāyu*, 69
apostacy, 329
Arabs, 5, 12, 237, 274, 278, 282, 320, 339, 348
Aramaic, 40, 210, 268
Arbela, 213, 248
arch, 343, 344
archer, 132, 135, 185, 195, 204, 306, 338-340
architecture, 12, 13, 148-150, 205, 206, 252-257, 343-350
Ardvi Sura Anahita, athravans seek knowledge from, 124
begged to give easy delivery, 80
begged to give milk to mothers, 80

Ardvi Sura Anahita,
bestows kingdoms full of chariots, 133
has her chariot, 133
has white arms, 23
implored to give knowledge, 82
invoked to give valiant husbands, 79
puts on garments of beaver skin, 14
sacrificed by Azhi Dahaka, 5
the festival of, 193
wears a girdle around her waist, 175
wears golden ear-rings and necklace, 176
wears shoes reaching her ankles, 175
*aredusha*, 117
Arejataspa, captured by Spentodata, 139
kills priests in the temple at Balkh, 125
threatens to invade Iran, 92, 93
*argpat*, 336
Aristobulus, 217
Armenia, 202
armlets, 176, 366
armour, 11, 132, 338
armpieces, 338
army, 11, 135, 243-248
arrow, 11, 130-132, 138, 194, 245, 338
art, 146, 147, 205, 206, 252, 257, 343-350
Artaban, 307
Artakhshir, consults Indian astrologers, 378
founder of the Sasanian Empire, 273
Kingly Glory cleaves unto, 307
orders compilation of scattered religious texts, 280
rejuvenates Zoroastrianism, 333
*Arteshtārān sālār*, 312, 337
Artystone, 220
Aryans, 3. 4, 21, 22, 201
asceticism, 277
Asfandiyar, 16, 88, 92
Ashi, gives cattle, 68, 144
gives golden ornaments, 176
gives offspring, 70
gives swift horses, 183
grieved by conjugal infidelity, 77, 111, 112
grieved when maids are dissuaded from marrying, 77
sacrificed by Zarathushtra, 74
*āsnatar*, 123
*asnya*, 172
Asoka, 211
*Aspa ashtrya*, 111-121, 126
*asperena*, 167, 170
*aspwārgān*, 338
assaults, 116-118
*astobid*, 117
Assyrians, 201, 203, 253, 254, 256
astrologers, 11, 87, 91, 103, 104, 129, 196, 197, 230, 242, 378, 379
Astyages, 203
*āthravan* (Phl. *āsronān*), 64, 122, 267, 332
Athwya, 5
Atropatene, 202
Audience Hall, 254
Augustine, St., 277
*avaoirishta*, 117
Avesta, 38, 39
axes, 126, 143
*ayara*, 172
*ayāthrima*, 171
*āzainti*, 38, 269
*āzātān*, 296
Azhi Dahaka, 5, 18, 191

B

Babylonia, 236, 237, 253, 256
Bactria, 21, 166, 202
Bactrians, 201, 267
Bahman, 88, 130
Bahram I, King, orders Mani to be flayed to death, 329
Bahram, General, 301
Bahram Gur, 304, 316, 320, 375
Balkh, priests in the temple at, 125
balls, spiked, 246
banners, 12, 133-135, 339
banquets, 205, 231, 315
Barbad, 377
Baresman ordeal, 108
barley, 142, 187
bas-reliefs, 204, 254, 255, 341, 346-348
battle-axe, 246
beards, priests wore long, 23
beauty, idea of, 23
Behistan, 256
bells, Indian, 134
Bible, the, 239
bill, 246
birds, 369
birthday, 203, 222, 228, 231
Bizan, 79, 103
blacksmiths, 146
Bodleian library, Iranian manuscripts in the, 42, 279
body-guards, 92, 230
Bogaz-keui tablets, 201
Books of Chronicles, Achaemenian, 214, 230, 281

Book of Kings, 87, 281
booty, 11, 12, 137, 185, 341, 348
Bosphorus, Darius erects pillars on the shores of, 242
bow and arrow, 11, 130, 131, 194, 245, 338
bracelets, 204, 259
breastplates, 132, 246, 338
bribery, 240, 322
Bridge of Judgment, injurer of a dog suffers at the, 182
mythical dogs guard the, 179
Rashn stands at the, 358
soul of one who has not adopted a son detained at the, 298
Bukht Khusru (Phl. Patkhusrob), the Arab king of Yaman, 5
bulls, human-headed, 254
Burzin Mihr, fire, 295
Bushyansta, 185
Byzantine Rome, 275, 277, 343

## C

calendar, 171-173, 361-364
Cambyses, 240
camel, 184
canals, 143
caravansarais, 239, 320, 345
casques, 94
castles, 150
catapults, 339
cattle-farming, 143-145, 148, 177, 178
cavalry, 135, 204, 339
celibacy, 77, 78, 276, 301
*chakar zan*, 303
chamberlain, 91, 203, 230, 313, 315
Chandragupta, 211
chang, 377
characteristics, racial and physical, 22, 23, 202, 211-213, 274
chariots, 133, 204, 242, 246, 247, 338
charnel houses, 149
chase, the staples of life in earliest times, 7
Chatrang, 375, 376
cheetahs, 194
chess, the game of, 278
children, 69, 70, 83, 297, 298
Chisti, 23, 84, 124, 175
*chithra*, 69
Christianity in Persia, 275-277, 329
Christians, a poll-tax paid by, 319
chronology, 173
Church, union of the State with the, 307, 308, 333
Civilization, begins when man lives in a fixed abode, 140
Civilization,
definition of, according to the teachings of Zarathushtra, 35
Greek, in contact with Achaemenian Persia, 210, 267
to be spread throughout the world, 36
clans, Iranian, 5
clarions, 11, 134
cleanliness, 155-165
coats of mail, 94, 132
cock, 66, 185
coinage, 237, 238, 257, 320, 349, 350, 357, 358
colours, 175, 176, 183, 258, 316, 365
Columbia University, Iranian manuscript in the Library of, 42
columns, 254, 255
combat, single, 11. 138, 139
commerce, 166-170, 218, 219, 356-360
concubines, 203, 205, 220, 232, 233, 245, 316, 337, 338
conduits, 143
Confession of Faith, 63, 144, 197
confiscation, 101, 102
Constantinople, 342
contracts, 113, 114
Copenhagen, Iranian manuscript in the University Library of, 42
copper-plate, a Pahlavi inscription on, 283
coppersmith, 146
copy, archetype, of the sacred texts, perished in the flames of the palace burnt by Alexander at Persepolis, 40
corn fields, 142
coronation, 87, 218, 227
corpse-bearers, 162, 163, 176, 355
corpse-eating birds, 157, 162
dogs, 157, 162
corpses, 119, 120, 156-159, 176
corselets, 246
couriers, 238, 239
crimes, 110-121, 328, 331
crossbows, 338
crown, 147, 349, 350
Ctesiphon, 340, 342-344
cuirass, 132, 147, 338
Cuneiform script, 210
cup-bearers, 189, 203, 205, 261
cupolas, 344
cups, ceremonial, 126
Cyaxares, 203
cylinder, 257, 348
cymbals, 134
Cyrus, entertains his army, 260, 261
his tomb, 217, 255
revolts against the Median rule, 209

D

Daena, implored by Hvovi, 77
daggers, 132, 138, 245
Dahi, 76
daiṅghu pathni, 86
*daiṅghu paiti*, 86
*dāitya-gātu*, 149
Dami Upamana, 104, 109
*danare*, 167
dancing, 194
*dāng*, 357
*danghu*, 64
*Dapirān Mahist*, 312
Darab, King, 88
Dareja, 24
*daric*, 237
Darius III, 12
Darius the Great, enforces capital punishment on those not joining his expedition, 241
  erects two pillars, 242
  establishes a system of roads, 239
  his tomb, 256
  the blessings of, 256
  the system of fixed tributes introduced by, 236
*Dashmest*, 167
Dastagird, 340
*Dastur*, 332
*dāta*, 95
*dāta vidaeva*, 95
*dātbar* (Pers. *dāvar*), 322
Daevayasnians, 63
day, 172, 173, 363, 364
dead, ancestral, cult of the, 67-69, 72, 298
  the feast of the, 191, 192
dead, disposal of the, 149, 156, 157
dead matter, 119, 120, 156-165
Defender of the Faith, 308
defilement, 118-120, 156-165
*dehkān*, 317
Deioces, 201
deluge, icy, inundates, Airyana Vaejah, 4
*den framātār*, 332
*den peshopāi*, 332
dice, kings playing, 231, 262
dies, the art of cutting, 349
dike at Shuster, 345
dināṙ, 357
Diocletian, 268
*dirham*, 357, 358
discipline, military, 136
diseases, 151, 152, 351, 352
divination, 11, 87, 91, 103, 104, 129, 196, 197, 378, 379
Divine Glory, alights upon Pishdadian kings, 3
divorce, 302
Dizh-i Nipisht, 40
dog, 144, 157, 162, 178-182, 194, 367, 368
dome, 343, 344
Drafsh-i Kawan, 12
Draonah, 142
dreams, 218
dress, 14, 15, 146, 174-176, 204, 205, 258, 259, 316, 365, 366
Druj, 68
drums, 11, 87, 134, 185, 195
Drvaspa, 74, 105, 133
dualism, cosmic, 33
  ethical, 32 ,33
Dubasrujid Nask, 178
*durustpat*, 352
dyke at Shuster, 277

E

eagle, 369
ear-rings, 146, 176, 259, 349, 366
East, contact with the West, 210
  and West try conclusions, 213
Ecbatana, 201, 202, 205
eclipse, 203
education, 82-85, 224-226, 305, 306
effigy, winged, 256
Egypt, 211, 236, 237, 253, 279
Elburz, Mount, 22
elephant, 11, 133-135, 147, 174, 185, 248, 338, 340, 347, 368, 369
envoys, 92, 93
era, 173
*erezaurvaesha*, 172
Ethiopians, 236
etiquette, 202, 212, 219, 221, 228, 313
eunuchs, 202, 203, 220, 222, 223, 232, 233, 237, 245, 262, 316, 337, 338
Europe, 242, 277, 279
*evak zan*, 303
evidence, legal, 99, 100, 323
evil, 32, 33
Evil Spirit, 32, 33
exorcising evil powers, 124, 151, 152
Eyes and Ears, King's, 203, 231

F

fable, literature of, 278
falchions, 132
falcons, 194, 369
family, 66-73, 219, 297-299
Farangiz, 90
Farhad, 348
Fariburz, 87, 90
farming, 141

Fars, 209
Farsi, 209
Farsistan, 209
Fashioner of the Cow, 143, 177
fasting, 187, 370
Fate, 378, 379
feasts, 13, 14, 190-193, 372, 373
festivals, 13, 14, 190-193, 260, 372, 373
feudal lords, 10, 11, 89, 90, 141
fifes, 134
Firdausi, draws his materials from Khudai Namak, 281
fire, 8, 9, 66, 67, 71, 80, 105-107, 192, 295
fire-temples, estates attached to, 334
kings showering treasures upon, 94, 125
kings visit the, 336
libraries and treasuries attached to, 345
places of justice adjoining, 97
resident priests at, 125
schools adjoining the, 85, 306
the construction of, 149
Firuzabad, 343, 344, 346
flags, 12, 133-135, 339
fleet, 248, 249, 342
flutes, 134, 195, 205
fly, 186
fly-chaser, 230, 231
food, 134, 135, 180, 181, 187, 188, 205, 226, 231, 260, 261, 370, 371
fortresses, 13, 137, 150, 339
*frābāzū*, 167
*fraberetar*, 123
*frāhangikān*, 305
*frāhangistān*, 306
Framraz, 130
Franrasyan, 62
*frārāthni*, 167
Fravashis, 22, 62, 68, 70, 128, 129
*frazā baodhah*, 117
free-will, 379
Froba, fire, 295

G

*gāh*, 172
*gāhānbār*, 171, 362
games, 190, 195, 205, 374-376
Ganj-i Shapigan, 40
*gaoyaoiti*, 142
Garonmana, 30, 194
garrisons, 137, 239
Gathas, 25, 195
Gaya Maretan, 3, 9, 69
Geldner, Younger Avestan poetry, first discovered by, 43
Genius of Kine, 143
gifts, royal, 93, 94, 137, 231, 314
Gilan, 22, 140
girdle, 14, 15, 75, 174, 175, 365
Giv, 94, 130
glaziers, 146
Glory, Kingly, 5, 62, 109, 273, 307
goblets, 94
gold, 9, 166, 176, 277
Golden Age, 14
goldsmiths, 146
gongs, 134
Good Spirit, 32, 33
gorgets, 132
Goshasp, fire, 295
Grand Vizier, 308
greaves, 338
Greeks, contact of the Persians with the, 210, 213, 245, 250, 255, 267, 268, 277, 278, 280, 342, 352
Grotenfend, 256
Guardian Spirits, 67, 68, 128, 129, 144, 183, 191-193, 197, 362
guards, 137, 203, 239
Gudarz, 88, 129
guitar, 377
Gurgin, 104

H

Hagamatana, 201
hair, 23, 205
Hakhamanish, 209
Hamadan, 206
*hamaspathmaedaya*, 171
*hāmin*, 362
*han-dvarena*, 63
hand-mill, 143
hanjamana, 63
Haoma, the angel, 23, 68, 112, 115
Haoma, mystic plant, 70, 71, 144, 145, 161
Haoshyangha, 3, 4, 8-10, 13
Haosravah, Kavi, 22, 86-88, 91, 103, 125, 130
harp, 195, 377
*hāthra* (Phl. *hāsar*), 167, 358, 359, 363
*hāvanan*, 123
*hāvani*, 172
*hāvishta*, 83
*hazanah*, 114
*Hazārpat*, 312
health, public, 118-120, 155-165, 351-355
Hellenic Civilization, 267
Helmand, 22
helmets, 147, 245, 246, 338
Heraclius, 304, 340, 341
heroes, 71, 127

High Priest, 99, 122, 308, 309, 321, 322, 325, 332-334
Hiuen Tsang, 356
Hormazd II, 321
Hormazd IV, 301
horses, 11, 135, 182-184, 204, 246, 368
hospitals, 352
hostages, 139, 341, 342
houses, 148
*hufrāshmodāiti*, 172
*hūiti*, 64
Humai, Queen, 86, 88
hunting, 194, 195, 203, 231, 262, 263, 315, 347, 374, 375
*hurā*, 189
Husparum, 78, 122
Hutaosa, Queen, 74, 80
*Hutokhshpat*, 313
huts, 12, 148
Huzvarish, 269
Hvare Khshaeta, 115
Hvovi, 77
hygiene, 155-165, 354, 355
hymn, wedding, 80, 81

## I

Immortals, the, 243, 244
imperfections, physical, social, and moral, 34-36
implements, agricultural, 143
  ceremonial, 125, 126
  of war, 130-132
incantations, 151, 152, 197
inscriptions, Assyrian, 201
  cuneiform, 256
  Pahlavi, 282, 283
  trilingual, 214, 256
Indo-Iranians, 21
inheritance, the law of, 100, 101, 323, 324
interest, 102
inventions, 8
Iran, the native name of Persia, 4
*Iran Dapirpat*, 312
Iranians, their contact with the Arabians, 5
  their generic and adopted names, 62
*Iran sipāhpat*, 312, 337
irrigation, 9, 143

## J

Jamaspa, foretells the result of the war, 103, 129
  incurs royal disfavour, 196
Jamaspa,
  prescribes the manner of taking an oath, 105
javeline, 130, 132, 195, 246
Javidana-i Khirad, 8
Jaxartes, 21
Jews, 211
  a poll-tax paid by the, 319
Judaism, 211, 275, 276
Judea, 211
*juju*, 357, 358
Julian, 341
Jund-i Shapur, academy at, 280, 306
justice, 95-121, 239, 240, 321-331
Justinian, 277, 340, 352

## K

*kafiz*, 360
Kanheri caves, Phl. inscriptions in, 283
*kat khudāe*, 317
Kavata, King, 93
Kavi Usa, 86-88, 90, 93, 94, 103, 130
Kawa, 12, 133, 135, 339
kettledrums, 134
Khishtab, 8
Khorasan, 22
*khrafstraghna*, 126, 185
*khshapan*, 172
*khshathra*, 86
*khshatrapa*, 234
*khud sarāi zan*, 303
Khudai Namak, 281
Khusru Parviz 273
  had a large harem, 316
  his hunting scenes at Tak-i Bustan, 375
  his palace at Mashita, 343-345
  Roman galleys stop the armies of, 342
  sculptured at Tak-i Bustan, 347, 369
  takes divine titles, 307
kilns, 146
King, 9-11, 86-94, 202-206, 212, 213, 227-233, 239, 247, 259, 274, 307-316, 366
Kingdom of Righteousness, 33
Kingdom of Wickedness, 33
Kobad, executes a testament, 308

## L

ladles, 126
*lahmā*, 269
lance, 194, 338
language, alleged demoniac origin of, 8
  Avestan, 38-40

language,
Pahlavi, 268, 269, 279
Pazand, 281, 282
lasso, 132, 138, 183, 184, 194, 338
law, 95-121, 239, 240, 321-331
life, Ancient Iranian view of, 16-18
settled, 140, 141
Zoroastrian view of, 31-37
literature, 7, 8, 38-61, 214-217, 279-294
litters, 147, 245
loan, 102
loyalty, 212, 213
Luhrasp, 86, 88
luxury, 205, 273, 274
Lydians, 203, 237, 238
lyre, 377

M

mace, 11, 92, 130, 131, 194, 338
Macedonians, 267, 268
*mad*, 357, 358
Mada, 201
*madhu*, 188, 189
Magi, 201, 210, 218, 230, 242, 258, 259, 267, 332
magic, 201
*magopat*, *magpat*, 332
*magopatān magopat*, 332
*maidyārya*, 171
*maidyoishema*, 171
*maidyoizaremaya*, 171
Mainyuchithra (Pers. Minocheher), 193
Majesty, Divine, 10
Mani, 348, 349
Manichaeism, 277, 329
Manijah, 79, 103
manufactures, 146, 147
manuscripts, 41, 42, 279
*māonghah*, 172
Mar Aba the Great, 276
Marduk, 211
market-places, aversion to the, 218, 225
marriage, 5, 77-81, 122, 203, 221, 232, 275, 301-304
Maruzas, 341
*marzpān*, 317
Mashita, the palace at, 343
Mashya and Mashyoi, 9, 14, 35, 36
mattocks, 143
Maurice, 341
Maurya Empire, 211
Mausoleum, 13, 255
maxims, 60, 61
Mazandaran, 22, 140
Mazdak, the communist, 330
Mazdayasna, 62
Mazdayasna Zarathushtri, 62
measurements, 167-169, 358-360
meat, 187, 188, 205, 260, 370
Medes, 201-206
medicine, 9, 152, 351-355
memory, retentive, prayed for, 84, 124
Memphis, 236
mercenaries, 128, 135, 136, 210, 237
metaphors, 57-60, 288-294
migrations, early Aryan, 3. 4, 21
Mihrgan, the feast of, 13, 14, 372
Mithra, 22, 23, 41, 42, 68-71, 86, 104, 128, 130, 131, 133, 142, 144, 231, 268
mithra, a contract, 113
Mittani kings, 201
Mobad hierarchy, 274, 310
Mobadan Mobad, 312, 332
molten metal, ordeal by, 107, 108
month, 172, 363
mortar, the Haoma, 126
used for agriculture, 143
Moslem architecture, 343
mourning, 175, 176, 221
music, 195, 262, 315, 347, 377

N

Naksh-i Rajab, 343, 346
Naksh-i Rustam, 255, 343, 346
name, generic and adopted of the people of Iran, 62
Nasks, 40, 41
Naudar, King, 10
Nebuchadnezzar, 203
necklace, 146, 176, 349, 366
Neit, 211
Neo-Platonism, 277
New Testament, in Syriac script, 282
New Year's Day, the festival of, 13, 88, 190, 315, 372
Nikadum Nask, 73
Nimruz, 93, 94
Nirangistan, 188
Nisaean horses, 204
nmāna, 64, 67
nmāno-paiti, 69
nmāno-pathni, 69
Noshirvan, King, builds the new Antioch, 341, 342
establishes academy at Jund-i Shapur, 280, 306
fortified stone structure at Ahuan of, 345
funeral oration of, 288
honours Mar Aba the Great, 276
in a bas-relief at Shapur, 341

Noshirvan, King,
introduces reform in the army, 337
patron of literature, 278
reformed the system of government, 317, 319
visited by Justinian's envoys, 340
wedded non-Zoroastrian woman, 304
welcomes Greek philosophers, 277

O

oath, 102-105, 325-327
Onesicritus, 217
optimism, characteristic of Zoroastrianism, 36, 37
ordeals, 105-110, 327, 328
ores, smelted, 146
Ormazd II, 277
Ornaments, 9, 15, 176, 204, 205, 259
*ostāndārān*, 317
Ottoman Empire, 275
ox-goad, 143
Oxus, 21

P

*padire andar māh*, 363
*padire pur māh*, 363
*padire vishaptath māh*, 363
*pādshāh zan*, 303
Pahlavi, 268, 269, 279
*pāigān*, 338
*pairi daeza*, 39, 263
*paitishhahya*, 171
*paiti zainti*, 281
palaces, 12, 13, 148, 149, 205, 235, 253-255, 343-345
paradises, hunting grounds, 204, 263
*parasang* (Pers. *farsakh*), 167, 358, 359
parasol, 228, 347
Parendi, 133
parents, 69, 79, 83, 297, 298
Parodarsh, 25
parricide, 219
Pars, 209
Parsi, 209
Parsua, 209
Parthava, 268
Parthian rule, 267, 268
Pasargadae, 209, 218
*pasush-haurva*, 144
pastoral pursuits, 7, 179
pasture fields, 142, 143
patents, royal, 94
*pātiz*, 362
Patkhsrob, see Bukht Khusru
*patkospān*, 317
Patriarch, 276
Pazag Nask, 188
Pazand, 281, 282
Perse, 209
Persepolis, palace burnt by Alexander at, 40, 214
*peshvā*, 332
Philhellenics, 268
Phoenicians, 249
Phraortes, 201
physicians, 151-154, 210
physique, 22, 23, 211
pipes, 11, 87, 134, 195
Piroz, King, 320, 345
Pishdadians, 3-18
*pishtra*, 64
platform, at Persepolis, 254
Platonism, 277
plough, 143
poetry, 43, 281
poll-tax, 319
polo, 195, 300, 306, 315, 374
poor, the, protected by Sraosha, 64, 68
post, 238, 239, 320
pottery, the art of, 146
Pouruchisti, 79, 81
Pourushaspa, 183
priests, 122-126, 332-335
priestesses, 122
property, the law of, 100, 101, 113-116
prostitution, 111, 112
puberty, the age of, 78, 79, 174
*puhal*, 298
*puhar*, 298
punishment, 110-121, 240, 251, 330, 331
*pur māh*, 363

Q

Qadisiya, 12

R

race, foot and horse-, 195, 262, 374
*raethwishkara*, 123
Ragha, 64
rainfall, 18, 142, 192, 193
Raman, 194
*raocanhām fragati*, 173
*rapithwina*, 172
Rashnu (Phl. Rashn), 97, 115, 358
*ratha*, 133
*Rathaeshtār*, 64, 133
*ratu*, 123

Rawlinson, 256
receptacle, bone, 149, 157
Renovation, 107
Reshistana, 116
revenue, 318-320
Rhages, 202
riddles, 8
right hand, the seat of honour, 92, 221
rill, 143
rings, 366
roads, 9, 239, 320, 356
robbers, 114-116
robes of honour, 174, 204, 231, 258, 314
Romans, contact with the, 268, 275, 277, 320, 340, 342, 347, 356
Rudaba, 79
Rustam, 16, 79, 90-94, 102-104, 129, 130, 138, 139, 189, 194, 195

S

Sacae, 249
sacrifices, animal, 187, 188, 191, 260
Sad Dar, 298
Sada, feast, the, 13
Saini, 76
Sairimyan, 76
Sakadum Nask, 73, 106
Sam, 10
sandals, 146, 175
sanitation, 155-165, 354, 355
Sanskrit, its relation to Avesta, 39
works rendered into Pahlavi, 278, 280
Saoka, 109
*saokenta* (Pers. *sugand*), 102
Sardis, 239
*saredha*, 171
Sarvistan, 343
*satar zan*, 303
*sator*, 324
satraps, 222, 234-237
saws, 126
sceptre, the royal, 229
schools, 85, 225, 306
scimitars, 132, 338
scribe, 91, 203, 230, 244, 247
scouts, 11, 134, 137, 244, 247, 338
script, 282
Scythians, 242
seals, 147, 256, 257, 348
seasons, 171, 172, 361-363
seat of honour, 92, 221
segregation, 164
Seistan, 22
Seleucids, 12, 268
Semitic peoples, contact with the, 5, 40, 201, 210, 268, 269, 282
seraglio, 10, 232, 235, 237, 316, 337, 338
Shahrbarz, 304
*shahrikān*, 317
Shalmanesar II, 209
Shapur I, a collection of the Avestan texts ordered by, 43, 280
sculptured at Shapur, 347, 348
takes divine titles, 307
Shapur II, 347
Shapur III, 304, 347
*shatroyār*, 317
*shekel*, 237
shields, 132, 246, 338
Shirin, 300
shirt, sacred and girdle, 14, 15, 75, 174, 365
shoes, 146, 147, 175, 205, 259
Shuster, 345
sickles, 143
signet-ring, 94, 135, 147, 176, 256, 257
silver, 9
silversmith, 146
similes, 57-60, 288-294
Sind, 211
*sipāhsālār*, 337
slaves, 73, 222, 262, 315, 316, 337, 338
sling, 11, 130, 195
Smerdis, 230, 232, 237
society, 62-65, 218-223, 295, 296
sodomy, 112, 113, 330
Soma, 188
sons, adopted, 72
kings sent gifts to parents who had many, 219
valued more than daughters, 70, 71
Sorab, 138, 139
sorcery, 106, 197, 379
spades, 143
spear, 11, 131, 138, 245, 338
spells, 123, 151, 152, 197
Spenta Mainyu, 24
Spento-data, 139
spinning, 146
sports, 190, 195, 220, 262, 263
spy, 137
Sraosha, 64, 68, 130, 131, 133
Sraoshāvarez (Pbl. *Sroshāvarzdār*), 123, 231
*Sraosho charana*, 111-121, 126
standards, 12, 133-135, 247, 339, 340
State, union of the Church with the, 307, 308, 333
*stir*, 357, 358
Sudabah, Queen, 90, 107
Suez Canal, 216
sugar-cane, 9

*surā*, 189
*surām*, 173
swimming, 262
swords, 11, 130, 131, 138, 147, 245, 338
Syavarshan, 86, 90, 107, 175
Syria, 261, 283, 342

T

Tabaristan, King of, 328
*tābu*, attached to woman, 76
*tachar*, 167
*tachat-vohuni*, 117
Tahmina, 79
Takhma Urupi, 4, 5, 8, 9, 197
Takht-i Jamshid, 13
Tak-i Bustan, 343, 346, 347, 369, 375
tambourine, 195, 377
*tan beshazak*, 352
Tansar, a Platonist, 277
  classifies crimes, 328
  compiles the scattered religious texts, 280
  on divisions of society, 296
  on dress, 366
  on royal testament, 308
  states that the rigour of law modified by Artakhshir, 328, 329, 331
*taokhman*, 69
tapestries, 255
taxes, 318, 320
*tāyu*, 114
teacher, 83, 84, 224, 225, 305, 306
tents, 135, 146
texts, sacred, Avestan on secular subjects, 43
  contents of the extant, 41
  estimated extent of the original, 40
theft, 114-116
Thretaona, the Athwyan, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 152, 173, 191
Thrita, 9
thrones, 147
tiara, 204, 246, 258, 366
Tishtrya, 18, 22, 71, 112, 142, 144, 175, 183, 192, 193
tombs, royal, 255, 256
tongs, 126
travs, ceremonial, 126
treaty, 340
trenches, 12, 339
tribes, Persian, 218
truce, 340
trumpets, brazen, 87, 134
truth, 212, 225
tunics, 94, 174, 175, 204, 246, 258
Turanians, 5, 62, 75
Turfan, 282
Turkestan, finds from, 349
  the northern steppes of, 3, 140
turquoise, 176
Tus, 94
tymbals, 11, 134, 185

U

uncleanliness, 118-120, 155-165
*ushahina*, 172
*ushām*, 173
*ushtra*, 184
utensils, cooking, 146, 188

V

*vahār*, 362
Valerian, Emperor, 277, 346
*varah*, 105
Varahran II, 346
Varahran IV, 346
*varistān*, 105
Varshtmansra, 122
*vāspuhargān*, 296
*vāstrya fshuyant*, 64
*vāstryosānpat*, 312
*vāstryosān* sālār, 312
*Vata*, 109
Vayu, 3, 69, 79, 80, 175, 176
*Vazurg farmātār*, 312
*vazurgān*, 296
Vendidad, the codification of laws, 96
Verethraghna, 22, 112, 183
*verezena*, 64
veterinary surgeons, 153, 154
*vibāzu*, 167
Victories, flying winged, 347
*Vīdaeva dāta*, 95
vin, 377
Vin-i Artakhshir, 315, 375, 376
vis, 64
*vishaptath māh*, 363
Vishtaspa, 21, 88, 92, 103, 104, 127, 129, 137, 144, 173, 183
*vitasti*, 167
Vourukasha, 193
*vyākhman*, 63

W

warfare, 11, 12, 127-139, 204, 241-251, 336-342
watch-towers, 137, 150
waters, festival of the, 192, 193
weapons, 11, 130-132, 245, 246
weaving, the art of, 9, 147
weights, 166, 167, 358
West, contact with the East, 210

West,
tries conclusion with the East, 213
wheat, 142, 187
wine, 9, 188, 189, 205, 261, 357, 370, 371
witches, 197
women, 15, 74-77, 85, 219, 220, 259, 300-304
wrestling, 138, 139, 190, 195

X

Xerxes, the army of, 242-244
the fleet of, 249, 250
Lydian places his millions before, 238
offers libations, 242
slays the man who shirks military duty, 241

Y

Yahweh, 211
*yāre*, 171
Yazdagard I, King, wedded non-Zoroastrian woman, 304
year, 171, 172, 362, 363
Yima, King, asked by Ahura Mazda to be his prophet, 16
divided society into four classes, 7, 63
first to dig out gold, silver and precious stones, 9
first to discover sugar-cane, 9
first to make wine, 9, 188
inaugurates the New Year's Day, 13, 172
introduces sacred shirt and girdle, 14, 15
leads a conference of men with angels at Airyana Vaejah, 3
leads Iranian migration southwards, 3
loses Kingly Glory, 5
said to have reigned for seven hundred years, 173
warned by Ahura Mazda of the coming deluge, 4
*yujyast*, 167

Z

Zabulistan, 90, 130
Zadmistana, a section of Nil.adum Nask, 116
Zagros, 202, 209
Zal, 10, 79, 84, 90, 91, 93, 94
*zamistān*, 362
Zand, 38, 269
Zantu, 64
*Zaotā*, 122
*Zaotar*, 123
Zarasp, 103
Zarathushtra, at the royal court, 29
called a true athravan by Anahita, 124
finds Vishtaspa at the Bactrian Court, 21
his image, 346
is stabbed to death, 30
made to pass through fire in heaven, 107
meets with persecution, 28-30
nature's joy at the birth of, 24
ponders over the problem of life, 25
preaches his religion, 29, 30
receives Mazda's divine message, 27
retires to the mountains, 25
sacrifices unto Drvaspa and Ashi, 74
seeks communion with Ahura Mazda, 27
seeks to win over Queen Hutaosa to his faith, 74
the protector of the Kine, 143
time and place of the birth of, 24
undergoes an ordeal by molten metal in heaven, 108
wore a white robe, 175
*Zarathushtratema* (Phl. *Zartushtum*), 123, 332
Zarathushtri, 62
Zaredasht Afshar, 8
*zaremaya*, 171
Zend-Avesta, the collocation, 38, 39
Zindah Rud, 8
zither, 377