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# AVESTAN GATHAS

BY

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TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

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## PREFACE

This translation of Prof. Meillet's book "Trois Conférences sur les Gâthâ de l'Avesta" was undertaken by me at the request of my friend Pandit Kshetresa-chandra Chattopadhyaya, M.A., of the Department of Sanskrit, Allahâbâd University, and kindly revised by my friend Dr. P. C. Bagchi, M.A., D.-ès-Lettres, of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture in our University. To both of them my thanks are due, as well as to M. Paul Geuthner for having granted me the necessary permission to translate these lectures which had formed the subject of Prof. Meillet's discourse at the Upsala University in 1923.

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# AVESTAN GATHAS

## INTRODUCTION

The Avesta text is often repelling. Whoever has had sufficient experience would excuse M. Geldner for not having finished his monumental work, at least for having written, in the beginning of the preface, that "the Avesta is not one of those fertile fields to the study of which one should consecrate the best years of one's life."

But, beside the interest which it holds for the linguist, beside the fact that it is the only literary text preserved in ancient Iran, it has the merit of containing a series of verse compositions, like the Vedic strophes, which have a peculiar significance: these are the *gāthās*.

James Darmesteter has, no doubt, put forward the theory that the *gāthās* were the later text; that the language differed from the rest of the Avesta only in orthography; that the abstractions found there were probably in imitation of Platonic doctrines. Saying this, Darmesteter did not push to the extreme conclusion the process which made it possible for him to revive the study of the later Avesta: reasonably convinced that the later Avesta in its present form is a compilation of the Sassanide epoch, he has interpreted it, by means of tradition which goes back to the times when the Avestan doctrine was the State religion. But what is practically true of the Sassanide Avesta is not true of the *gāthās* which are inserted there. Between the language of the later Avesta and that of the *gāthās*, there are many and fundamental differences: in proportion as the writing or script allows us to note, the phonetic form presents remarkable divergences; the morphology is often not clear; the vocabulary is largely different. Regarded essentially, the abstractions in the *gāthās* have not the character of Platonic

abstractions. The hypothesis of Darmesteter has not been accepted, and all the world agrees to see in the *gāthās* a text at once ancient and original. Nevertheless, the tradition of the sense of this text was lost in the Sassanide era: the Pahlavi translation of the later Avesta is generally correct and furnishes the key to interpretation, while the Pahlavi translation of the *gāthās* shows that the translators are ignorant of the grammar of the text and of the meaning of many of the words. The translation by J. Darmesteter, done according to tradition, rests then on a very weak basis, and it is impossible to utilise it. J. Darmesteter has applied here a principle which he taught: the scholar should have a clear-cut doctrine, and should rather make a mistake of fact than have a feeble doctrine which allows itself neither to be proved nor disproved completely. So far as the later Avesta is concerned, J. Darmesteter has been correct in his findings; but as regards the *gāthās*, he has been mistaken. The public, accustomed to place confidence in the sound translation of the Avesta, should guard itself against the portion devoted to the *gāthās*.

Indeed, it is not possible to translate the *gāthās* in a sure and complete manner. Beside the fundamental difficulty to be explained here in Chapter II, one is struck by the singularity of a text which is found isolated in the Iranian literature, by the desire which the authors have of expressing themselves in a way widely different from the usual, and finally, by the great number of words of unknown meaning which one comes across there. Thus the words are thrown off in an order which seems often arbitrary and which systematically disagrees with the usual order: the name of the god of the *gāthās*, *Ahura Mazda*, which is, as one knows, a juxtaposition and which in Persian is presented as one word, one of which the second term only is inflected, appears most frequently with the two terms separated, or at least the order of the two terms reversed, and one finds it a nominative *Mazdā Ahurō*, rather than *Ahurō Mazdā*. This common fact suffices to give an idea of the difference which the

authors have kept to guard between the current usage and their manner of writing.

The translation which M. Bartholomae published in 1905 under the title *Die Gāthās des Avesta, Zarathushtra's Verspredigten* is the only complete translation on which one may generally rely. It rests on a linguistic doctrine firmly built, coherent from end to end, and follows the text most closely. It starts from the admirable dictionary of the same author and it has merits. But it is to be regretted that M. Bartholomae should have believed it his duty to translate almost wholly a text in which a great many passages are almost unintelligible, that he has thought it necessary to explain almost all the words even where the data do not allow us to find the exact significance, that he does not explain in any manner in his study the degree—variable from case to case—of probability of his interpretation. On the whole, M. Bartholomae gives a just idea of the *gāthās*; but he who would study in detail the text can do so only on one condition,—that he must examine to what extent the translation of the passage under discussion rests on data positive and certain.

What shows that the translation of M. Bartholomae is generally correct is that the translation, independent and profoundly critical, which MM. Andreas and Wackernagel have offered of one portion of the *gāthās*, errs in detail. One knows that MM. Andreas and Wackernagel have, on the form of the text, some opinions wholly different from M. Bartholomae's; on the spirit of the text, they are most frequently of the same opinion with him. But one would have praised them if they had left more of the passages untranslated and if they had made more use of interrogation marks. These translations are published in the *Nachrichten* of the Academy of Göttingen in 1909 (pp. 41-49), 1911 (pp. 1-34) and 1913 (pp. 363-85); they have bearing on the chapters 29 to 32 of Yasna.

If many passages still remain obscure, one might say that the general sense of the *gāthās* is known and that there is now harmony among the scholars who study them.

Although the text has been often studied in recent times, there remains much to do to determine exactly its place in history, its literary character and religious significance.

We would attempt to present the conclusions in a most distinct manner so that the Iranists may confront them with facts, and confirm or refute them.

After the *Zoroastrian Theology* of Dhalla (New York, 1914) it is easy to see how the doctrine of the *gāthās* is distinguished from that of the later Avesta. The religion of the later Avesta appears as a compromise between the religious reform of which the *gāthās* are the only authentic monument and the ancient Iranian tradition parallel to the Indian tradition represented by the Vedas. The doctrine is placed in the light of religious development by James Hope Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, London, 1913 and by R. Pettazzoni, *La religione di Zarathustra*, Bologna (without date, preface dated November, 1920). M. Bartholomae has briefly summed up his views in a recent small brochure: *Zarathustra's Leben und Lehre*, Heidelberg, 1924.

The three authors agree in giving the most prominent place to the personality of the reformer whom the Avesta names as *Zarathustra*. Even the text of the *gāthās* is willingly attributed to him. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prove that all the fragments come from the same hand. The fact that *Zarathustra* is frequently mentioned there in the third person does not lend countenance to the view or supposition that all the pieces in the *gāthās* are the works of the reformer himself.

Really speaking, all that is certain is that the compilers of *Yasna* have inserted in their text a number of archaic fragments which are preserved and which, so far as they were concerned, were almost unintelligible, but considered as a sacred heritage. The *gāthās* are ruins preserved from Zoroastrian reform, but one fails to see how it may be established that all these are works by the same hand. One fragment expresses personal sentiments, has individual accent, has life. Another,

like Yasna L. is devoid of character and creates an impression of being the work of a school. The pieces preserved are too few in number and too little in length to allow of any useful departure. The fact that the *gāthās* are considered here as a whole is due to the impossibility of doing any critical work, not to the conviction that these texts form an entire work. The small collection of the *gāthās* represents the remnant of one whole literature. If one treats them here as a unit, that is necessary for critical purposes : these texts are too slight, and above all too disjointed for the critic to have any chance of coming to sure and accurate results, or even results probable and a little more definite. The collection is luckily sufficiently coherent, so that there is nothing very inconvenient to treat it as a whole. But one should remember that if the *gāthās* are seen as a whole, it is so by a rough approximation which without doubt is wide of reality. It is with that reservation that one should read these lectures reproduced here.

Be that as it may, the *gāthās* form, in the traditional Avestan text, a strange literature, and one can feel it.

The manner of writing marks the difference from the very beginning. The language is essentially different. And the doctrine differs still more, as one may find at once on reference to the work of M. Dhalla on the Avestan Theology, already mentioned.

In the *gāthās* one breathes everywhere in the presence of systematic religious reformation, the moral ideas appear at the first view; the opposition of good and evil spirits comes out without cease; the reward after death is the main question; the beneficent powers expressed in abstract terms which constitute some sort of court to Ahura Mazdā are mentioned almost in each strophe, either by name or at least by means of allusions; the sacrificial rites, on the other hand, do not play any part.

On the contrary, the doctrine of the later Avesta has a *syncretic* character; this is the result of a compromise between

pure Zoroastrianism of which the *gāthās* give a glimpse, and an ancient ritualistic religion, of a type corresponding to the Vedic. Gods like Miθra are adored. Sacrifice is largely practised, so much so that the collection in which the *gāthās* have been incorporated is the part which is recited at the time of sacrifice, for want of careful preservation of the old texts proper to be recited in the solemn sacrifice; the priests who, at the close of the Arsacide period and at the beginning of the Sassanide period had organised the Avestan religion, had utilised the only religious poems preserved, though these poems had not been composed in view of the ritual and though they came out moreover from a reaction against ritual; nothing shows better the compromise effected between Zoroastrian religion and the religion of the Aryan (Indo-Iranian) aristocracy, and also the ruin of ancient traditions since the Macedonian conquest and the beginnings of the Parthian kingdom, Iranian from the political point of view, Hellenic from the point of view of civilisation. The *Aməša spənta*, who consist solely of beneficent powers, without any material personality, materialise more and more and come towards concrete personages. All sorts of usages and superstitions are incorporated in the religion and more or less justified by the opposition of good worlds and bad. The Evil Spirit which was only an expression realised from evil-doing, comes out a sort of divine being opposed to Ahura Mazdā; thus is constituted a sort of dualism, in the place of the moral opposition between good and evil which characterises the doctrine of the *gāthās*.

This syncretism is well illustrated in a famous chapter of the later Avesta, Yasna IX: Zoroaster figures there, but is accompanied by *Haoma*, who is the principal object of Indo-Iranian sacrifice, the Vedic *Soma*. And it is from this sacrifice that the legendary figures of the Indo-Iranian tradition come out: the same names are to be found simultaneously both here and in the Vedas. Zoroaster becomes an *epigone* of persons of Indo-Iranian tradition.

The ruins of that tradition were then kept up side by side with ruins, wholly different, of the Zoroastrian reform. The language bears evidence ; as a whole the language of the Avesta is in a more advanced stage of development than that of the *gāthās* ; but it contains archaisms which, already in the language of the *gāthās*, had disappeared or were about to disappear. (See *Journal Asiatique*, 1914, II, p. 183, ff.)

It is important moreover to note that in spite of the close proximity of linguistic types, the language of the later Avesta is not the continuation of the language of the *gāthās*. The fact has been indicated; but it has not been studied in the way it ought to be. A vocabulary bears a striking proof of the difference between the two. The later Avesta names the three castes, as the priests, the warriors, and the agriculturists by three Indo-Iranian terms ; the name *aθaurvā* for the priest, approaches closely the Vedic *áthárṁvā*,---the name *raθaδēstā* (in the nominative) for the warrior is identical with the *ratheṣṭháh* of the Vedas; as regards the name *vāstryō fšuyas* for the agriculturist, it is not found in India; but the form from which is derived *fšu-ya*---the name for the "beast," Sanskrit *paśu*, Av-*pasu*, declares itself as old by its vocalism (vocalism to the zero degree of the radical element in a derived verb). Now, the *gāthās* have three different terms for the same ideas: *airyamā* (*aryama* means "a companion" in Vedic); *xvaθētus* (that is to say, "members of a group"; close to Gr. *ἔτης*, *ἔταπος*, *ἔταιπος*; *vərəzənō*, *vərəzənyō* (with some traces of speech found later; *vāstryō fšuyas*). The later Avesta is more faithful than the *gāthās* to the traditional Indo-Iranian vocabulary.

When the great nationalist Iranian revival was effected which ended in the foundation of the Sassanide empire, the small remnant of miscellaneous traditions was utilised, though ill. The Mazdyan religion which then had to take its definite form became the State religion, while Zoroastrianism had been a sect. That the Avestan religion is narrow and strict is largely

due to this ; hence the contrast, so striking, between the entirely moral religion of the *gāthās* and the intellectual poverty of the Sassanide Avesta. One sees thus that the Avesta gives a very slight idea of the liberty of spirit, of the religious ardour, of the lively intelligence, of the taste for changes in manners which has always characterised the Iranians. The *gāthās* reflect that brilliant mentality and all its ardour ; the later Avesta does not contain even the ashes of that brilliance.

## THE DATE OF ZOROASTER

What the Greeks teach on the date of Zoroaster is fantastic: Zoroaster had lived 5 or 6 thousand years before the War of Troy. Ctesias gives another story, but not more precise. In brief, the Greeks have not collected on Zoroaster any exact tradition. As they well knew the Persia of the Achaemenean sovereigns with which they had been in constant communication, this means Zoroastrianism was neither the official religion, nor a religion important to the Persian, properly speaking.

On the other hand, the Zoroastrian church itself has a tradition which is at the same time both precise and plausible. That tradition, found in Pahlavi texts, the *Bundahisn*, the *Arda Viraf*, has been subsequently collected by the Arab historians; the active career of Zoroaster (*Zarathustra*-, after the Avestan form of the name) had begun 258 years before the era of Alexander; he belonged then to the second half of the 7th and the first half of the 6th century before Jesus Christ. Zoroaster, born towards 660 before Jesus Christ, according to the correction<sup>1</sup> of West, had been 42 years old at the time of the conversion of Vistāspa.<sup>2</sup> Certainly everything in the Zoroastrian tradition has not the same degree of verisimilitude. But the fact of the conservation in an archaic language as that of the *gāthās* confirms that there is a tradition and authorises us not to refuse implicit confidence in the traditional dates.

Cyrus reigned from 558 B.C. to 529 B.C., and Darius I from 521 to 485 B. C. Zoroaster had then preceded slightly the period of the great Achaemenean sovereigns.

<sup>1</sup> "A slight chronological correction after Dr. E. W. West," Jackson. Dr. West's translation from Pahlavi texts strengthened the traditional point of view. Jackson dedicates his book "Zoroaster" (1899) to Dr. West.

See Prof. Jackson's book, Appendix II, pp. 160-178.

<sup>2</sup> "The Constantine of the Faith," Jackson.

And, as a result, the religious reform of which one would try to define the character, implies great historical and social movements. The establishment of a vast empire, governed by an absolute king, has been in the Indo-Iranian world, quite a new thing ; undoubtedly it is the result of those same movements to which is due the Zoroastrian sect. This important fact dominates the problem.

A lyrical text, entirely religious, just as the *gāthās* are, is not calculated to furnish historical precision. Nevertheless, the (actual) conditions existing in the epoch when the *gāthās* were composed, come out in the text. Now, these conditions fit in with the traditional date.

The *gāthās* present without cease the burning desire for a political chief to defend the holy doctrine and the believers. Against Vistāspa who practically accepts and protects the Zoroastrian doctrine, there are hostile chiefs, as well as Bəndva,<sup>1</sup> Y. XLIX, 1-2.

The ancient Indo-Iranian regime, then, exists. There was an Aryan nation which had a very strong sense of unity, but there was no chief in whom all the strength was centred. Each tribal chief had the power in his own group.

When the *gāthās* enumerate the political groups—and they do so more than once—they indicate the “house,” the “family,” the “tribe,” and the “province.”

*dəmānəm—visəm—sōiθrəm—dahyūm*

Y. XXXI, 18 (see also Y. XXXI, 16 ; XLVI, 4). A central line of kings is never considered. Everything passes off as if the great fact of the Achaemenean dynasty had not yet come into being.

To the chiefs of the group, the *gāthās* give only the name “Master of the house” (*dəng paitiš*). But this must have been by chance. The late Avesta has the names of all the chiefs of the group, like the chief of the province, *dahyupaitiš*.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Jackson questions its being a proper name.

Now, the characteristic trait of Achaemenean epoch is the supreme chief, the *xšāyathiya xšāyathiyānām* of the inscriptions, the *βασιλευς par excellence* of the Greeks. The *gāthās* do not know of any such supreme chief, a personage practically unknown to the Aryan, as to the Indo-European world.

There is not, then, any reason to believe that the Vištāspa who had protected Zoroaster had anything in common with Vištāspa, father of Darius. In the Achaemenean empire, there had been only a king and his satraps; Vištāspa, father of Darius, was not a sovereign. The Iranian names have a tendency to repeat themselves; just like the Greek proper names, they have been borne by several persons.

In the measure, then, in which a text like the *gāthās* widely different from material realities, rises to give a glimpse of historical things, that state fits in with the traditional date. To speak the truth, it does not exclude a more ancient date. But the possibility of a later date is rendered very slight. Now, as M. Bartholomae has shown, there is nothing to put it higher (at a more ancient date).

In his brochure where he has summed up his views on Zoroaster, *Zarathustra's Leben und Lehre* (Heidelberg, 1924), M. Bartholomae affirms that the traditional date is "surely much too low" (p. 10). But the proof he gives is not convincing.

The name *Mazdaka* figures as early as the 8th century B.C. on an Assyrian inscription to designate a Mede. The most that could be inferred from this is that as early as that, *Mazdā(h)* was the name of the great Iranian god. But nothing in the *gāthās* indicates that Zoroaster had been the first to give that place to *Ahura Mazdā(h)*. It is not the name of the god which characterises Zoroastrianism. To judge by the text, Zoroaster adores a god commonly admitted. *Ahura* is a common Indo-Iranian

word, the Vedic *Asura* ; and the grouping of *Mazdā(h)* with *Ahura* would be decidedly before Zoroaster.

The Achaemenean sovereigns had for their great god *A(h)uramazdā*. The inscriptions say that distinctly ; but they do not say that *A(h)uramazdā*, who was the common god of all the Iranians, had been known in the manner peculiar to Zoroaster. One has not then the right to conclude that Zoroastrianism has been the official doctrine of the Achaemenean sovereigns, nor is it necessary to suppose an interval greater than that between 583 B.C., when Zoroaster died according to tradition, and 538 B.C., when Cyrus ascended the throne.

All the alleged proofs rest only on one assumption, which is arbitrary, namely, that before Zoroaster the Iranians had not *Ahura Mazdā(h)* for their god.

Language bears a satisfactory confirmation of the evidence supplied by tradition.

Tradition teaches that Zoroaster was a native of the North-West of Iran and some texts state precisely, he was born at Raghā (' *Ράγαι* of the Greeks), then in the neighbourhood of Teheran. Now, if one examines the language of the Avesta in general and of the *gāthās* in particular, one finds immediately at first sight that it differs from Persian, which excludes the South-West, and that it differs also from Sogdien and also from the speech of Khotan of which one has now the texts, actually deciphered, like all the Eastern speeches. The language of the Avesta rests then on the speeches of the North-West. In concluding a searching memoir which he came to publish, *Dialektologie des westiranischen Turfantexte* (in the *Monde Oriental*, Vol. XV, 1921, pp. 184-258, Upsala, 1924), M. Paul Tedesco shows that the Avestan language belongs to the group of the languages of the North-West (p. 255 ff.). The proof is obtained by purely linguistic processes, independent of tradition which it comes also to confirm.

Of little importance, after that, are the indications—all borrowed, moreover, from the late Avesta—following which the

Avesta would be constituted as written in Eastern Iran. Even if they are accurate, they amount to nothing. It is not on the basis of the speech of the country, Moravia, where they worked and where reigned the sovereign who summoned them, that the first Slav translators fixed the religious language of the Slavs; it is in making use of their language, the speech of the Salonika region.

The condition of the language as presented by the *gāthās* does not permit us to fix the time, with any amount of precision, as to when that language came to be fixed. Because the rapidity with which languages evolve varies from case to case. In the second place, a literary language once fixed continues without any great visible change; Latin, in which the mediæval texts are edited does not give any idea of Italian, Spanish, or French which people spoke after the 13th century A. D. Finally, there is no landmark for the dialect to which the Avestan language belongs.

For want of any definite landmark, one may read through the Achaemenean inscriptions where is used a different dialect, but of the same type. It has been often said that these inscriptions were written in a fixed language—in an official language. On a close examination, one gathers a wholly different impression: the language in which these are inscribed should be that of the Persian aristocracy from among whom Darius recruited his first assistants and satraps. One finds there in a sufficiently accurate manner the state of Persia in the time of Darius (521-483 B. C.) and Xerxes.

That state of language belongs again to the old type of Indo-Iranian. The final syllables continue. There is one declension for multiple cases. Most verbal types are preserved either in the current usage, or at least in some notable relics. But there is rapid progress of the revolution. The final consonants are already much reduced. The casual forms are lost to declension; the dative is not distinguished from the genitive; the instrumental is to a great extent confounded with the

ablative; the nominative and the accusative masculine plurals of demonstratives have only one form. The perfect is replaced almost entirely by periphrasis. The modern Iranian stage is not yet reached; but the language is settling down, and one feels that it will not be long in coming to that.

One detail marks well the difference of level in the *gāthā* language, that of the late Avesta and the old Persian (which is from an entirely different dialect). In the *gāthās*, the two terms of the name *Ahura Mazdā(h)* are autonomous; they are often separated from each other; the order varies and one has it *Mazdā(h) Ahura* as well as the inverse. In the late Avesta, the two terms are again mutually flexed: *Ahurā Mazdā*; but the order is fixed. In old Persian, the unification is complete, and the last term only is flexed: *A(h)uramazdā*.

Persian, the language of a conquering aristocracy which has occupied new regions, is bound to evolve rapidly. And there is roughly speaking one century between the traditional date of Zoroaster and that of Darius. On the other hand, the language of the *gāthās* should be archaic. The Persian inscriptions bear trace of a traditional religious language which the authors of the *gāthās* have not failed to know as well. The nominative plural in *-āha* of the themes in *-a-* is not conserved in old Persian as by tradition; but, it is found in the *gāthās* and also in learned tradition. The word *fraēšta* (messenger), unknown to the late Avesta, but undoubtedly known in the *gāthās*, has there the plural *fraēštānhō* (Y. XLIX, 8).

But, as the appeal of the *gāthās* lay to the public, they could not differ much from the current language; all religions which seek converts should have recourse to a language intelligible to the people. Buddhism and Christianity are instances in point. In many cases, the *gāthās* present some forms already evolved and more altered than those of the Avesta text (see the article in *Journal Asiatique* already referred to, p. 19). Likewise the flexion of *vīspa* has conformed to the general nominal type; dat. sg. *vīspāi*, gen. plur. *vīspanām*; there is one first person

singular thematic *sīsā*, in place of the athematic form reached afterwards 3rd person singular *sāstī*, etc. Many little details show that at the moment when the *gāthās* were composed the language was gliding rapidly to a new state.

This is the position ; it is true that the state of the language of the *gāthās* is yet extremely archaic, and that this archaism is often the case, though it disappears now and then, and that in this the language is like that of the Ṛgveda. The rule *τα ζῶα τρεχει* is rigorously applied. The first person primary of the singular active in the athematic type is still in *-a*, a thing unique in all Indo-Iranian. The opposition of *gaidī* "come" and of *jantu* "that he may come" continues. The results of the law of Bartholomae are not effaced, and the forms *αογτα* "thou hast said," *aogədā* "he has said" continue, in face of the form *avata* of the recent Avesta. But nothing in all this implies a date more ancient than the end of the 7th century B. C. The rule *τα' ζῶα τρεχει* is applied in Greek still much less.

If the condition of the language of the *gāthās* is more ancient than that of old Persian, and in a very sensible manner, it does not imply, evidently, a further difference from the century indicated by the tradition. The old uses tend to be on the point of change. A curious fact is that the genitive-ablative singular of the athematic type lives in the language of the *gāthās* as in Vedic, whereas in late Avesta, the ablative singular has been distinguished everywhere from the genitive by a special form and has received the final *-t* of the ablative on stems in *-a-*. But the action of one type on another had already begun ; it was seen only in the language of the *gāthās* in a form the reverse of that which has prevailed in the recent Avesta ; the form of the genitive *vərəzənahyā* comes from the ablative (Y. XXXIII, 4), on the analogy of the forms of the athematic type. One observes here, once more, how the evolution of the *gāthās* is not what has been the case with the forms of late Avesta.

Whatever little help may come from a text like the *gāthās*, whether by its contents or by language, to supply a new date or confirm the old, the data derived from such studies agree with the date indicated by the tradition as well as with the localisation. And as that date is on all points apparently correct and there is no suspicion, it is necessary to keep to it. We can fix a date for the text of the *gāthās*. One might then turn it into account for reconstructing the ancient history of the people speaking the Iranian language—so full of blanks and obscurities—and also for following the development of the religious thought in Iran.

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## II

### THE COMPOSITION OF THE GATHAS

If one tries to read the Avesta, one perceives immediately that it is an impossible task ; there is not a single chapter which has unity, nor a fragment that is continuous from beginning to end.<sup>1</sup>

And the explanation is this : The Avesta is neither a book nor a collection of books or complete pieces. It is a set of fragments, to speak the truth, a field of ruins, not of Greek ruins like those of Selinus where the temples, thrown down, rise and yet display their plan and fine arrangement, and stretching under the sun, glorify the luminous gods ; but shapeless ruins lying about without any order.

As J. Darmesteter has seen it, our Avesta is a collection of fragments preserved by chance which editors wholly devoid of skill and thought have placed side by side without any system.

The work does no credit to the Sassanian church : the extreme intellectual poverty is exposed there from one end to the other. But there the modern savant is the gainer ; if the fragments had been retouched and reunified, the old state of the text which is now guessed would no longer have been disclosed. Thanks to the intellectual poverty of the editors, one disposes of the highly interesting authentic fragments.

The script gives some idea of the history of the text. The characters employed are Aramaic ; but the consonants are followed by signs indicating the vowels in the Greek manner. The two actions which are exercised in the Arsacide<sup>2</sup> era thus

<sup>1</sup> "It resembles more a collection of scattered verses than one continuous whole." Haug, p. 146. "Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis."

<sup>2</sup> This dynasty reigned in Parthia and Armenia from about 250 B. C. to 224 A. D. in Parthia, and to 428 in Armenia.

are shown in the form in which the text has come down. Besides, the consonants have been differentiated from one another with the aid of a sort of diacritic marks, in a manner to note the differences not indicated by the Aramaic alphabet, specially the difference between occlusive and the spirant consonants.

This form of the text is not the most ancient. It has been preceded by a notation purely Semitic where the vowels were indicated whenever necessary by *matres lectionis*, but where they do not appear systematically, and where the diacritic signs do not exist. M. Andreas has put in evidence that ancient form which it is necessary always to reconstitute when one wishes to explain the way how the text has been fixed in writing at the beginning.

The Greek influence is then wholly secondary and superficial. The only ancient influence is Aramaic. But the Aramaic script does not exert any more any profound influence on the civilisation. Neither in the Avestan language nor in other Iranian speeches, are to be found words borrowed from the Aramaic. While the Persian is penetrated by Arabic words, the old Persian and Pahlavi have not accepted any Aramaic vocabulary. The Pahlavi script could at first sight create an impression ; but it has been long known that Aramaic words from Pahlavi are only some masks covering Iranian words ; *mīn* is *ac (az)*, *li* is *man*, *malkā* is *šāh*, *gabrā* is *mard*, and so on. If there had been any doubt, the Pahlavi texts from Turfan, those from the North as well as from the South, have proved conclusively that such doubts are totally unfounded.

The fact is singular ; generally speaking, borrowing a manner of writing indicates an influence of civilization. Here, the script alone has been borrowed. It is that, breaking with the Babylonian tradition, the Persian had recourse to the Syrians for the script ; the bureaus of the Achaemenian empire are served with Aramaic. No doubt the monumental inscriptions are in cuneiform characters ; but the parallelism

between the Babylonian and néo-Susian texts explains it ; now, the extreme reduction of the number of characters employed shows that the Cuneiform Persian alphabet has been constituted after an Aramaic model. When one has written the Iranian with Aramaic characters—what was bound to happen later at the Arsacide era—, the Aramaic scribes had found it convenient to guard the Aramaic form from all the usual words so that at first sight the Pahlavi texts have an air of a medley of Iranian and Aramaic.

It is difficult to imagine at what moment the Avestan texts were written down by means of Aramaic characters similar to those with which the Pahlavi was written—no doubt at first the Pahlavi of the north which is represented by the Sassanian inscriptions worded in Chaldeo-Pahlavi, and by one portion of Turfan texts in Western Iranian. To judge by diverse details and by differences of orthography which reflects the transposition in the alphabet which possessed subtle peculiarities and was employed later on, the texts of the *gāthās* and others have been noted separately. But, when there has been transcription from the simple ancient alphabet to the new alphabet supplied with vowels and diacritic signs, that transcription was first made for the *gāthās*; and it is only after the addition of some new characters that the transcription of recent (or later) texts has been done. A minute criticism would permit us no doubt if not to determine with precision, at least to sketch out the complicated history of these notations.

As for the original script, one would not try to determine if the first authors had written (the texts) or if the texts, confined at first to memory, have been written down after the occasion, and in that case, at what moment they had been fixed in writing for the first time.

One sees how there are many elements unknown or ill-determined in the history of the texts. But one sees also that, in all the epoch, the *gāthās* have been treated quite differently from the later Avesta. They have been a precious survival

of which the tradition has been saved on more than one occasion.

It remains to find out *in what consists* the document preserved with so much piety.

A cardinal fact is striking : the *gāthās* are in verse, and these verses constitute the strophes. In this respect they are like the Ṛgveda, which includes hymns rendered into strophes of varied types. Whether for the number of verses, or for the number of syllables in each verse, or for the position of the division in the verse, the strophes in the *gāthās* will bear comparison with those of the Vedas. There is no doubt that both of them are issues of the same Indo-Iranian type.

Between the Vedic verse and the Avestan verse—of the *gāthās* as of the later Avesta—there is nevertheless an important difference : the Vedic verse obeys definite laws of quantity in certain definite places ; the Avestan verse does not. If, as indicated by numerous and well-defined similarities, the quantitative rhythm of verse attested by the similarity of Vedic and old Greek and confirmed by the quantitative nature of the rhythm of the language, had existed since the Indo-European, the Avestan verse has then lost one of the principal constituent elements in Indo-European verse. That change is explained by the fact that, in many positions, the quantity of the Iranian vowels has altered : the final vowels of the word have not the proper quantity ; the prolongation of the phonic group tends to abridge the vowels in the middle of the group (contrast known between *dəmānəm* [with a common Iranian *ā*] and *dəman-ahyā*, between *čəwārō* and *čəwarasča*). In compensation the place of the stroke which in verses of more than eight syllables, is obligatory, has become fixed ; it has lost the liberty which it had in Vedic and which was a heritage of Indo-European.

But if the metrical form of the strophes in the *gāthās* is close to that of the Vedas, the use is different. The Vedic hymn is a composite piece of work, one whole of which the

portions are continuous with as much rigour as might attend a lyrical poem. A *gāthā* of the Avesta offers on the contrary a series of strophes which correspond more or less to the same order of ideas, but which do not seem to present any regular sequence. The beginnings of each fragment are brusque ; each strophe forms a unity ; but from one strophe to the other there is an hiatus ; the whole thing is incoherent.

In his translation of the *gāthās*, M. Bartholomae is forced to mark, by analysis, the sequence of ideas. His exigences are modest ; he is content with forced sequences, of which the indications are very slight. Nevertheless he is unceasingly forced to declare that certain portions are separated from others, that portions of one hymn are not continuous, etc.

This fact calls for an explanation. To explain the brusqueness of such beginnings, M. Bartholomae has been led to admit that the verse pieces had succeeded sermons in prose, not preserved, which had been more precise and which had cleared up the versified part.

It is necessary to go farther. The most ancient Buddhist texts are composed of versified fragments, called *gāthās*, relieved by more or less brief prose fragments which clear them up. The more one rakes up the past, the more does the place of prose seem to be slight. But always there is something of prose. A similar arrangement would explain immediately the singular aspect of the *gāthās* of the Avesta. There exists only the expressive portion, rigorously stated and consequently versified, of a predication of which the part containing free and running explanation having no fixed form had disappeared. Since then the incoherence of the text is but what can be expected—a thing natural : it means that the links have not come down. If the hypothesis is admitted, it makes the explanation easy, where the strophes have a continuity, it is because there was little break, or no break at all ; where there is an hiatus or break, it is because a free exposition in prose was lost between the preserved strophes. Hence it is vain to try to discover continuities

or sequences where none existed. The text does not become much more intelligible ; but one gives up the position to force into it a cohesion which was wanting there by nature.

Now, the Buddhist composition, in prose for the explanations, in verse for all that which is expressive and proper to be formulated with force, is not the only thing of its kind in the Indo-European world. It is an old usage which is found again and again:

In the Italian-Celtic world where, to judge by striking similarities in religious and judicial vocabularies, are preserved the oldest Indo-European religious traditions, one finds again this same medley of prose and verse. The Irish epic is in prose, but interspersed with verses whenever the need for expression demands it ; and, just as prose is simple and clear, the verses are artificial, often obscure, decked with rare words. If one again takes up the *gāthās* of the Avesta, one understands whence comes the obscurity, and why almost in each strophe the vocabulary presents some difficulty, frequently making the whole of a strophe difficult, if not impossible, to understand. Rome, penetrated by the influence of Hellenic scholarship has dropped traditional varieties ; but one finds there now and then the existence of mixed passages in prose and verse ; the learned Varron who knew the ancient usages has cultivated the satire in the style of the philosopher Meneppius, medley of prose and verse. And, though the famous passage of Titus Livy on the origin of the theatre in Rome (VII, 2) is so little clear, yet there one finds the medleys of metres : “ *Qui non sicut ante Fescennino uersu similem incompositum temere ac rudem alternis iaciebant sed impletas modis saturas descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu motuque congruenti peragebant.* ” “ The writers do not fight, as one fought before now, with replies in a verse analogous to *fescennin*,<sup>1</sup> without rhythm, without a fixed plan,

without pains. They joy in satires, full of rhythmical varieties, with a song henceforth prepared to the accompaniment of a pipe and with appropriate stories." (From Lejay, *Histoire de la littérature latine des origines à Plaute*, p. 173 ff.)

The Iceland-Norwegian literature also knows the medley of prose and verse.

In conclusion one cannot but recall to mind the Greek drama where the lyrical strophes and lyrical monodies are intertwined between some versified fragments in the type of verse which, following the testimony of Aristotle, differs least from prose. The great difference between the two portions is emphasised by the fact that the lyrical portions have a "dialectal colour" which separates them from the language of current speech and contain a number of rare words, whereas the *dialogue portions* are written in a language comparatively close to the current speech.

In the Avesta itself, the seven chapters in prose of Yasna, which present the same script as the *gāthās*, include the fragments which may be cut out in verses of eight syllables. And the later Avesta is a medley of prose and verse. The medley comes often out of the juxtaposition of formerly independent fragments. But cases are not lacking where it appears to be old:

The hypothesis is then plausible in itself, following which one has in the *gāthās* the verse portion only of a whole of which the prose has been lost. It remains to be seen how it works when applied to the texts. Almost each *gāthā* serves to illustrate this hypothesis. One would select here a famous *gāthā*, the complaint of the Spirit of the Cow, Y. XXIX.

Following the old usage which is still at the basis of all the *gāthā* doctrine, the author realises in a sort of active person the whole thing that he considers. The Spirit of the Cow represents here all the bovine species. The word cow must not have the French meaning, but with a generic value; in strophe 5, it indicates the male, but it would be improper to translate it by "taureau" (bull); because the French term calls up essentially the idea of the "male," which here is of minor significance.

The first strophe begins abruptly. It is addressed to personages not named and not expressly designed. It is clear that this was preceded by a fragment in which the personages summoned were called.

1. xšmaibyā gauš urvā gereždā  
 kahmāi mā θwar(ō)ždūm kə mā tašaṭ  
 ā mā ašəmō hazascā  
 (rəmō) āhišayā dərəšcā təvišcā  
 nōiṭ mōi vāstā xšmaṭ anyō  
 aθā mōi sastā vohū vāstryā.<sup>1</sup>

“To you the Spirit of the Cow complains: why have you formed me? Who made me? Wrath and tyranny and brutality and force have come on me. I have no other pastor but you; give me then good pasture grounds.”

One finds here the personages summoned to reply to the Spirit of the Cow. But without any other aid, one is transported among the forces which form the cow. Following the usage of the *gāthās*, the active force is realised and it is the “maker of the cow” that intervenes.

2. adā tašā gauš pərəsaṭ.  
 ašəm kaθā tōi gavōi ratuš  
 hyaṭ hīm dātā xšayantō  
 hadā vāstrā gaodāyō θwaxšō  
 kəm hōi uštā ahurəm  
 ye dregvōdbiš āšəmēm vādayōiṭ.

“Then the cow’s maker has asked of Aša. How hadst thou a chieftain (spirit protecting) for the cow, so that you, who are the masters, you may give her with the pasture the care which

<sup>1</sup> One writes here the traditional text, which is the only sure data. It is well known that the vocalisation and the phonetic detail are not ancient.

comes back to the cow...? Whom would you have for the cow's master, who avoids wrath along with the wicked?"

3. The 3rd strophe bears the response to the question put ; it does not imply, but it does no more exclude, a little of intermediate prose. One would not translate it because it is roughly clear in the detail. It is said there that the person here may not protect the cow.

It is proper however to criticise a detail. The words spoken are attributed to Asha, who was called by the instrumental. But, though such hypothesis has been made for more than one passage, it is not admissible that, in a text with an archaic form like that of the *gāthās*, the subject would be expressed by the instrumental. Either the principal subject was certainly indicated in the prose explanation which preceded or it is fully a divine undetermined personage, *aśā* means "with Asha." Similarly Y. XLIX, 7 :

taṭcā vohū	mazdā sraotū manañhā
sraotū aśā	gūśahvā tū ahurā.

"and which he (?) hears with Vohū Mano, which he hears with Asha ; listen, thou, Ahura."

Here "he" is not determined by the text itself, it is an unknown personage, or indicated in the prose portion.

4. The strophe 4 bears a general indication which prepares the intervention of Ahura Mazda. One has a glimpse of the link; but a preparation is lacking :

mazdā saxvāre mairištō  
yā zī vāvarezōi pairi ciθiṭ  
daēvāiścā mašyāiścā  
yācā varəšaitē aipi-ciθiṭ  
hvō vicirō ahurō  
aθā nō añhaṭ yaθā hvō vasaṭ.

“ It is Mazdā who knows best the indications (?), those which were made in the past by demons and by men and those which would be made by the train of retinue ; but it is Ahura who decides it ; that it may be for us following his desire to him.”

5. The Spirit of the Cow takes up the word without which nothing pays it attention, and the fact which is indicated only by the possessive adjective “ my ” implies an introduction. Nothing helps us in guessing that the male would be, this time, accompanied by the female.

aḥ vā ustānāiš ahvā  
 zastāiš frīnemnā ahurāi ā  
 me urvā geušcā azyā  
 hyaḥ mazdam dvaīdī frasābyō  
 nōiḥ orəḥjyōi frajyāitiš  
 nōiḥ fšuyentē dregvasū pairī.

“ And we (two), with our hands outstretched, we are to address our prayers to Ahura, my spirit and that of the cow with young, when we address ourselves to Mazdā for our demands. It is not for the just or saint that there should be destruction, it is not for the pastor to be on the side of the wicked.”

6. This strophe is connected with the preceding ; because the indication of the speaker figures in the strophe itself ; the wholly prosaic beginning renders useless a fragment of prose in the middle :

aḥ e vaocay ahurō  
 mazdā vidvā vafūš vyānayā  
 noiḥ aēvā ahū vistō  
 naēdā ratuš ašēḥciḥ hacā  
 aḥ zi θwā fšuyantaēcā  
 vāstryāicā θwōreštā tatašā.

“ Then.....spoke Ahura Mazdā, who knew him,.....There is not, through Asā, neither master nor spirit. But it is for the pastor and the man of pasturage that the creator has created you.”

7. Only, the pronoun in the 1st person dual which is read in the third verse of the Avestan strophe shows that the “ Spirit of the Cow ” puts here the question. The strophe was accordingly drawn in by some indication.

təm āzūtōiš ahurō  
 maθrem tašaṭ ašā hazaošō  
 mazdā gavōi xšvidemcā  
 hvōurušaēibyō spəntō sāsnaṣ  
 kastē vohū manañhā  
 ye i dāyāṭ eoāvā marətaēibyō.

“ The form of fat holy Ahura Mazdā has created in company with Asā for the cow, and also the milk for those who would consume it, by his teaching. Who art thou, with Vohū Manō, whom we (two) look after in view of men ?”

8. The preceding strophe excludes, it seems, the case that the reply may come from Vohū Manō, though that has been supposed, and one does not see in whose mouth else it can be placed. Here lacks still at least some indication necessary for the correct understanding of the passage. And that would appear so much to be an essential portion of the fragment : because the character of the prophet Zoroaster is there forcibly drawn :

aēm mōi idā vistō  
 ye nē ašvō sāsnaṣ gūšatā  
 zaraθuštrō spitamō  
 hvō nē mazdā vaštī ašāicā  
 čarekərəθrā srāvayenhē  
 hyaṭ hōi hudemem dyāi vaxərahayā.

“ He is known to me here only who has heard my teachings, he comes, O Mazdā, to deliver the.....to us and to Asā. That one gives him the.....of the religion. ”

9. That strophe is linked with the preceding one ; the speaker is referred to in the beginning as in strophe 6.

aṭ čā gauš urvā raostā  
 ye anaššēm xšānmene rādēm  
 vācem neres asūrahya  
 yem ā vasemī išā xšaθrīm  
 kadā yavā hvō aṅhaṭ  
 ye hōi dadaṭ zastavaṭ avō.

“ Then sighed the Spirit of the Cow : That I should have to rest satisfied with a protection without force, with the voice of a man without his strength, I who desire a chief commanding with his strength ! When should I ever see him who would give a material aid to him (Zoroaster) ? ”

10. Then follow two strophes which Messrs. Bartholomae and Andreas-Wackernagel agree to publish by part ; the Andreas-Wackernagel translation places them within italics. It is a sort of prayer which should reply mainly to the last wailing of the Spirit of the Cow. But one fails to find in what way that final prayer answers to the wailing and to the demand so precise in strophe 9. That some gap is left here for a prose fragment appears very plain.

yūžēm ašibyō ahurā  
 aogō dātā ašā xšaθremčā  
 avat vohū manaṅhā  
 yā hušeitiš rāmančā dāṭ  
 azemčiṭ ahyā mazdā  
 θwam meṅhī paourvim vaēdem.

“ O you, Ahura, Aša and Xšaθra, give them force and strength, and this, with Vohū Manō, by which it may create good establishments and tranquillity. Me, O Mazdā, I have considered him as the first author of this. ”

One thinks that the "he" who is referred to here is Zoroaster who would have at last found the means of necessary strength. But that is not said ; now, it is only intelligible if it is expressed in every portion. There had been surely a prose fragment lying between; containing many explanations of which one has just a glimpse.

11. Unfortunately the last strophe is obscure. The prayer addressed to Aša, Vohū Manō, Xšaθra and Ahura Mazdā is distinctly visible ; but the detail suffers itself not to be exactly precise, one would not then try to translate the strophe, nor in the sequel connect it with what precedes.

Those passages which are translatable with certainty do not raise any doubt. The strophes are continuous only if we suppose that between them there runs a thread connecting them. That thread was the prose text, more or less formless, more or less improvised, which would precede the verse portions and which would intervene among them.

The same hypothesis is necessary, more or less clearly, for all the gatha texts. The strophes are portions of the same piece, they are not continuous hymns.

That hypothesis once admitted, it is easy to see how the text may be interpreted and one has the right to deduce it. One is not condemned to find at all costs between the strophes a bond which is sometimes apparent and sometimes wholly lacking.

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### III

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE GATHAS

It is not necessary to heap abuses at the difficulties and the obscurities of the text; the *gāthās* are dominated by a distinct theology which is to be seen almost in every line. There is one God who is *Ahura Mazda*. In each strophe, almost in each verse, one may perceive, either by name or under an allusion, one or the other of the *Aməša spənta*, and in a number of strophes they appear everywhere. The spiritual (*Manan'ha*) is distinguished from the corporeal (*Astvant*—). The tripartite division in thought, speech and action is always present. The good is opposed to the bad and it results in different retributions after death. Such are the main lines of the perfectly coherent doctrine.

A negative trait is striking at the very beginning: the word *yazata*—"the person who has the right to the sacrifice, God" which is current in the later Avesta and which was destined to a great fortune, is not found in the *gāthās*. It occurs only in the group of the *haptanhaiti* which is written in the script of the *gāthās*, but which forms no part of them. The *gāthās* know only one God who is *Ahura Mazda*. They do not insist on monotheism; but they practically present it exclusively. In the inscriptions of Darius occur the following words: *manā a(h)-uramazdā upastām baratuv hadā viθaibiš багаибіш*. "That Ahuramazdā bears me in course with all the gods" (Pers., d., and elsewhere); and virtually, when Herodotus (I, 132) speaks of the religion of the Persians, he sees a polytheism where the gods are natural forces, that is to say, in the ancient Indo-Iranian religion. It is not only the term *baga* which differs from that of the Avesta, namely, *yazata*—, passed subsequently into Persian; it is the essence itself of the conception that constitutes the

difference. The personnel of the different gods which the Vedas employ and which, as can be seen from the surviving traces in the later Avesta and the more ancient evidences of Cappadocia, was Indo-Iranian, is absent in the *gāthās*.

Another negative trait also calls for notice: the sacrifice has no place. Not only is the bloody sacrifice out of tune with the entire doctrine, ignored, but also the sacrifice of the *soma*: *haoma* appears only in the later Avesta where it occupies an important place. As regards the cow sacrifice described by Herodotus (I, 132) as related to the Persians, it is far away from the religion of the *gāthās*, beside that the existing *gāthās* may not be qualified by *θεογονίη*, as Herodotus expresses it.

Darius boasts of having restored the places of sacrifice, the *āyadanā*, pulled down by the magi or wise men *Gaumata*. The Persian root *yad* is the form corresponding to *yaz* of the Avesta. One feels tempted to ask if *Gaumata* whom Darius along with a part at least of the aristocratic Persians harassed was not a veritable follower of Zoroaster, which Darius himself was not. One may just put the question, but the hypothesis deserves to be considered. It is curious to observe that the first part of the name *Gaumata* approaches the name of the cow, which occupies so much room in the *gāthās*.

The Avestan root *yaz* corresponding to Sans. *yaj* and standing for the Indo-Iranian root meaning 'to sacrifice' is not unknown to the *gāthās*. One finds the verb *yazaitē* answering to Sans. *yājate* "he sacrifices," and the substantive *yasnō*, corresponding to Sans. *yajñah*, "sacrifice." But neither the verb nor the substantive properly expresses "sacrifice." There is also a passage where, in the usual enumeration, "thought, speech, action," *yasnō* indicates "thought." Y. XXXIV, 1:

*yā syaoθnā yā vacanhā yā yasnā aməratātətam ašəmč'ā taeibyō dānha|| mazdā xšaθrəmč'ā haurvatātō* "Actions, words, sacrifice (*i.e.*, the object of thought), for which you have given them, O Mazda, immortality and Aša and the reign of integrity." It might be noted that the verses, like so many

others in the *gāthās*, are to be taken with the technical terms strictly defined. It is clear that the word "sacrifice" is here used to mean "thought"; the author admits that the thought of pious men is sacrifice *par excellence*. Moreover, "thought, speech, action" are found again in strophe 2. In strophe 3, the offering is indicated by *myazda*. And it seems that, in strophe 14, the cow sacrifice has been expressly condemned as practised by the enemies of the religion :

*hyaṭc'ā gāuš j'aidyāi mravi' yə dūraosəm saocayaṭ avō*  
 "And that it has been said :—To you the cow is such as to procure help to him who puts away death" [*duraosā*—'who puts away death'—is the epithet of *haoma* in the later *Avesta*]. This fits in with the known fact that the *gāthās* ignore—would ignore—*Miθra*.

The rites have no place in the *gāthās* ; it is only the question, wholly moral, of opposition between good and evil.

So one reads now, Y. XLIX, 4 and 5, two strophes which contrast good and evil and with, like the verses already cited, the technical terms.

4.	<i>yōi durxraowā</i>	<i>aēšməm</i>	<i>varədəm</i>	<i>rāməmc'ā</i>
	<i>hvāiš hisubīš</i>	<i>fšuyasū</i>	<i>afšuyanto—</i>	
	<i>yāššaḍiṭ</i>	<i>h(u) vaštāiš</i>	<i>vas duzvarštā</i>	
	<i>ōi dāevəng dan</i>	<i>yā drəgvato</i>	<i>daēnā.</i>	

"Those who have helped anger and violence to grow by their active thought, by their languages, who do not rise from the herd while there are others who do so rise, those who are fond of wicked acts, not good deeds, have created the *daēva*, with their religious personality from the wicked."

5.	<i>aṭ vaš mašdā</i>	<i>isāca azūtīšcā</i>
	<i>yə daēnām</i>	<i>vohū sərəštā manānhā</i>
	<i>ārmatoiš</i>	<i>hasciṭ ašā hazəntuš</i>
	<i>tāišca vispaiš</i>	<i>θwahmī xšaθədi ahurδ.</i>

“But that, O Mazdā, is excellence and profit, who has united his religious personality to Vohū Manō (good spirit), having every knowledge of *Armaiti* (read *Aramaiti* “correct thought”) with Aša. With all these, he is in thy realm, O Ahura.”

The line thus drawn between those who are good and those who are wicked is often forcibly marked, thus Y. XLIX, 3 :

*tā vañhəuš sarə izyāi mānañho*  
*antarə vispəng drəgvō hazməng [ntarə] mru yē.*

“Consequently, I wish union with Vahū Mano ; I prohibit communion with the wicked.”

The old expression *antarə*.....*mruyē* is to be noted here, of which the Indo-European origin has its exactly corresponding term in Latin *interdicō*.

This is not to say that the system followed in the *gāthās* is dualistic. The Sassanian Mazdaism has a tendency towards dualism. But the *gāthās* do not place the good and the bad on parallel lines ; they are in a relation of antagonism ; a god is the principle of good ; but there is no divine personality for evil which would move on the same level with him.

Undoubtedly, the “Spirit of Evil” *añrō mainyuš* is opposed to the “Spirit of Good” *spəntō mainyuš*.

It is necessary to define “the Spirit of Good,” “*spəntō mainyuš*.” The *gāthās* preserve the Indo-European usage of seeing all force as an active reality of which one feels the manifestation. A moderner would say that the abstractions are realised ; but in truth, what is an abstraction to us was seen as an active force. *Spəntō mainyuš* is the active principle of all that there is good or profitable in the person of Ahura Mazdā.

As evil exists with regard to good, there is also an active principle of evil, simply counterpart of *Spəntō mainyuš*, that is, the Spirit of Evil, *añrō mainyuš* (*añra*—noted *angra*—in the orthography of the *gāthās*, being the ordinary adjective for “Evil” and *mainyu*—the ordinary word for the Spirit : one sees how this group of two different words is far from the personality

of an *Ahriman*). In the *gāthās* the principle appears only once under this name, and *anra* is there not close to *mainyu*—this is the passage so prominent in Y. XLV, 2, where the Spirit of Evil is opposed to the Spirit of Good and where the opposition is emphasised by the fact that the Spirit of Good is named in the comparative *spanyā* and not *spəntō* :

<i>aī fravaxšyā</i>	<i>anhəuš mainyū pouruyē</i>
<i>yayā spanyā</i>	<i>ūiti mravaṭ yəm angrəm</i>
<i>nōit nā mana</i>	<i>nōiṭ sənghā nōiṭ xratavō</i>
<i>naēdā varnā</i>	<i>nōiṭ uxδā naēdā syaoθnā</i>
<i>nōiṭ daēnā</i>	<i>nōiṭ urvīnō hac'aintē.</i>

“ I come to proclaim in the first place the two spirits of the world, of which the better has thus spoken to the worse ; neither our thoughts, nor our instructions, nor our active thoughts, neither our time, nor our words, nor actions, neither our religious personalities, nor likings are alike..... ”

The personality of an *angrō mainyus* is not firmly determined in the *gāthās* ; this is proved by the fact that in the other passages, however few, where the reference is to the “ Evil Spirit,” the authors make use of other adjectives : *akō*, Y. XXXII, 5 ; *dragva*, Y. XXX, 5. The only thing fixed is that a “ Spirit of Evil ” is opposed to the Good, and that is sufficiently established to enable one to speak of *mainyū* “ the (two) spirits ” in the dual, Y. XXX, 3 and 4 (therefore before the mention of the term *dragvā*), without explanation.

*Spəntō mainyus* is the immanent force of Ahura Mazdā, thus in Y. XXXIII, 12 ; XLIII, 2 ; LI, 7 and XLIV, 7.

The forces of evil are opposed to Ahura Mazdā and to the Spirit of Good which is his active force, with the *Aməša spənta*, train of beneficent forces which accompany Ahura Mazdā. There is perhaps now and then a theological artifice in the form of these oppositions : *tərəmhiti*—“ Thought beyond (rule) ” is made to oppose *ārmaiti*—“ Correct thought ” (that is to say, as

one sees it: ara-maiti-, always in four syllables: the traditional vocalisation is wrong) and *akəm manō* "that which is ill thought" to Vohū Manō "That which is well thought." One has thus, Y. XXXIII, 4 :

*yō θwaṭ mazdā asruštīm*  
*hvaētəušc'ā tarəməitīm*  
*airyamnaśc'ā nidəntō\**

*akəmc'ā mano yazāi apā*  
*vərəzənahyāc'ā<sup>-1</sup> nazdistam druj'əm*  
*gəušc'ā vāstrəṭ ac'istəm mantūm.*

"I who by my homage keep out from you, Mazdā, non-obedience and ill thought, and from the noble *v'brīs*, and from the industrious evil-doing close at hand, and that which is outrageous from the brotherhood, and the wicked master from the pasture for cows.

The forces of evil are only the reverse of the forces of good. There is no pantheon of the forces of good, still less is there a pandemonium of the forces of evil.

As regards the *daēva*—, they have no distinct physiognomy in the *gāthās*. It is not possible to ignore them ; these were beings well known to all, very familiar to all. There are wicked spirits, opposed to Ahura. Zoroastrianism has accepted them without caring to give them an exact place.

The text where the respective rôle of the two spirits is best defined is Y. XXX. In the strophe 3, *tā mainyū* is spoken of in the dual, and they are qualified by *yəmā* "twins," they are the "good" (*vahyō*) and the "bad" (*akəm*) in thought, speech, action ; one may choose between the two. There is a meeting between the "two spirits" in the beginning :

4. *aṭc'ō hyaṭ tā həm mainyū*  
*gaēmc'ā aj'yāitmc'ā*  
*ac'isto drəgvatam*

*j'asaētem paourvim dazdē*  
*yəθāc'ā aṅhaṭ apəməm aṅhəus<sup>2</sup>*  
*aṭ asāunē vahistəm manō.*

"And when the two spirits met in the beginning, they posited life and not-life, in a manner that, to the end of the

<sup>1</sup> This form has been explained above

<sup>2</sup> *nadento*, in MSS.

<sup>3</sup> The best MSS. have the rather strange form *aṅhus*.

world there had been the most wicked spirit (*mainyus*) for the wicked and the best thought (*vahistəm manō*) for the just.”

What are opposed here are the two spirits, Good and Evil ; *Ahura Mazdā* is far from that opposition. One sees it in strophe 5 :

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 5. <i>ayā mainivā varatā</i>           | <i>yo drəgvə ao'istā vərəzyō</i>  |
| <i>ašəm mainyūš sponistō</i>           | <i>yo xraozdištəng asnō vastē</i> |
| <i>yaēc'ā xšnaošən ahurəm haiθyāiš</i> | <i>šyaoθnais fraorəṭ mazdam.</i>  |

“ Now the two spirits have chosen,—the Evil, the worst actions, the most beneficent spirit (has chosen) *Aša*, him who is dressed with the most solid skies, and those who would satisfy benevolent *Ahura Mazdā* by correct acts.”

The *daēva* exist independently of the Evil Spirit. One sees it in the following strophe :

- |                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6. <i>ayā nōiṭ ərəš višyātā</i> | <i>daēvāc'inā hyaṭ is ā dəbaomā</i> |
| <i>pərəsmanəng upā j'asaṭ</i>   | <i>vərənātā acištəm manō</i>        |
| <i>aṭ ašəməm həndvərəntā</i>    | <i>yā banayən ahum marətānō.</i>    |

“ Between the two (spirits), the *daēva* have not made the just choice because error for which they were responsible came upon them. They have chosen the most wicked thought and they are hurled down all together towards *ašma* for doing harm to mankind as men.”

Between strophe 6 and strophe 7 there had been fairly an explanation in prose ; because it refers to *Vohū Manō* who is not named, and *Ahura Mazdā* of whom no previous mention has been made is not addressed.

- |                               |                      |                             |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 7. <i>əhmāic'a</i>            | <i>xšəθrā j'asaṭ</i> | <i>manānhā vohū ašāc'a</i>  |
| <i>aṭ kəhrpam<sup>1</sup></i> | <i>utayūitiš</i>     | <i>dadāt ārmaitiš anmā.</i> |

“ And to him *Armaiti* is come with Power and *Vohū Manō* and *Aša* and she has given help to the body ” (the last verse is not translated, when trial by the burning metal,

<sup>1</sup> Evidently a correction by Andreas and Wackernagel.

*ayanhā*, is referred), it is there that the author addresses Ahura Mazda, simply as *thou*.

In strophe 9, there is an invocation to *Mazdā* and to *Ahura* : *mazdaścā ahurañho*, with the learned plural form of *ahurañhō*, which indicates the antiquity of that indication ; that is found exactly again in Y. XXXI, 4. *Ahurañho* might not mean the two equals to Ahura Mazda, Mazda is moreover isolated in the formula itself. It is the procession or train of forces which surround Ahura Mazda ; they are named Y. XXXIII, 11.

<i>yə səvištō ahurō</i>	<i>mazdāśc'ā ārmaitiścā</i>
<i>ašəmč'ā frādatgaēθəm</i>	<i>manasc'ā vohū zāθrəmčā</i>
<i>sraotā mōi mərəzdātā mōi</i>	

“Very beneficent *Ahura Mazda* and *Armaiti* and *Asa*, who helps the world to prosper, and *Vohu Manō* and *Power* listen to me, have pity on me.”

The opposition between *fšuyasū* and *afšuyantō*, between “those who bring up the herd” and “those who do not,” as has been noted already, p. 57, in Y. XLIX, 4, is significant. The authors of the *gāthās* address themselves to the chiefs but to ask them for the protection of workmen against the tyrants who oppress them, and of the cattle against the wicked masters who maltreat them.

The ritualistic religion of which as far as India is concerned one has, the texts recited in the sacrifices, was that of the great Indo-Iranian aristocracy, direct heirs of the conquering Indo-European aristocracy. To cause to make a sacrifice of the Vedic type, with all the priests whom it requires and its elaborate development with minute details, it is necessary to be a powerful chief. The Vedic sacrifice then implies chiefs reigning over numerous subjects who furnish them with abundant resources. The aim of the sacrifice is openly to increase the strength of those who make it for their profit. The gods to whom it is

addressed are known by the image to the great chiefs who participate there.

The religion of the *gāthās* is that of men, agriculturers and above all shepherds, who live on the produce of the earth exploited by themselves. The Roman cultivator—Rome was governed at first and formed by an aristocracy of peasants—lived surrounded by active forces, propitious or hostile, the *indigetes*, *indigitamenta*; some spirit or other presided over each of his operations: a *ueruactor* for the first labour and a *redarator* for the second, an *insitor* for the sowing, and so on. There is one *Lucina* for the childbed. The Roman cultivator was surrounded by a world of spirits, expressions of each of his actions. Such were the cultivators, the Romans in the ancient world, the Lithuanians close to the modern epoch, who have preserved the cult of these partial forces to which Usener has so justly drawn our attention. (See in the last portion Schrader-Nehring, *Realexicon d. indogn. Altertumskunde*, II, p. 249.) The world of the *gāthās* is composed in the same way of active forces which preside over each activity and, as one has seen, it is not the gods, it is the active forces which form the entourage or train of Ahura Mazda. The cultivator is not interested in an aristocracy of gods who are far away from him; he thinks only of the democracy of forces which might serve or do him harm.

To take them literally, the forces mentioned in the *gāthās* have an abstract and distant air. But the cultivator knows them to be almost material realities.

*Aramaiti* is not only the correct and measured thought; it is all that which might be associated with measure. The chief, with his *ūβpis* (*tarəmaiti*-) aimed at conquest and domination. The cultivator aimed at the regular outturn of the produce of the earth; (*arəmaiti*) is not only the correct thought, it is the "earth."

*Hyrvatāt* and *aməratāt* are not only health and immortality, but also if one wished it, "drink" and "nourishment" of

immortality. These are the waters and plants at which the cultivator aimed, directly or indirectly.

The religion of the *gāthās* then belongs to a social layer different from that of the Vedic religion. It expresses the aspirations of men who work, who need a peaceful, ordered society, to profit by their work. Hence the first place is given to moral actions, not to the actions of the conquering force.

Thus we may explain the profound differences which are observed between the *gāthās* and the Vedas.

But the aspiration of the cultivator for a social order which assures to each the just return of his work is scarcely realised in a world still fully dominated by chiefs who lived on conquest and war. The poor, who find in this life so much injustice, are induced to imagine that the celestial forces make good, after death, the evil done in life. The notion of a retribution after death, of a chastisement of violence, of satisfaction rendered to the just, only transposes to the ideal world that justice which is absent from the world of the living.

The fate of the spirit after death is one of the dominant or principal anxieties with the authors of the *gāthās*.

In Y. XLVI, the author complains of being helpless in this life. He does not know where to go for prayer. Neither rank nor the priests, neither the people nor the chiefs, who are wicked, are with him (Str. 1). He has at his command few cattle, few men (Str. 2). He bows down only to celestial aid. The wicked do not try to make the cow thrive. The faithful count on *Ahura Mazdā* to find them protectors. At length come two strophes where everything is not clear, but where the general sense at least is intelligible :

10. *yə vā mōi nā*  
*dāyāt anheus*  
*asīm asāi*  
*yaso'ā haṣṣai*  
*frō tāis vispaís*

*gənā vā mazdā ahurā*  
*yā tū vōdīstā vahīstā*  
*vohū xšaθem mananbhā*  
*xamavatam vahmāi ā*  
*c'invatō frufrā pōretum.*

“That which, man or woman, O Mazdā Ahurā, creates for me whatever of the world thou knowest to be the best, retribution for Aša, domination with Vahū Manō, and those for which I would resolve to pray to beings like thou, with all these I would pass the bridge of separation (the bridge Cinvat).”

11. xšabrāiš yūjən	<i>karapano kavayasc ā</i>
akāiš šyaobnais	<i>ahūm mərəngəidyāi mašim</i>
yəng hvə urvā	<i>hvaəca xraodaṭ daenā</i>
kyat aibi gəmən	<i>ṛabā c'invato pənətuš</i>
yavai višpāi	<i>drūj'o dəmānāi astayo.</i>

“By their domination, by their wicked actions, the *karapan* and the *kāvii* led (?) men to do evil to the world whom their spirit and their religious personality would torment, when they would arrive where the bridge of the Separator stands, bound for a sojourn to the house of the *Drug*.”

This judgment, which would be followed by a last judgment, realises at last justice. The man of modest circumstances counts on Ahura Mazdā to protect him here below, and in default of success in this world to re-establish after death justice in his rights.

Thus the *gāthās* express the resistance of the cultivator to the brutal chiefs who trouble him in his regular activity. It is not a mere chance that this religious movement of the poor people just precedes the establishment of the Achaemenian dynasty. One practically knows that the Achaemenians had brought under subjection the local chiefs and governed all their empire by means of high functionaries, the satraps, representatives of the central authority. The world was weary of local powers fighting one another which, instead of security, made fight between neighbours a regular event. One would not wish this reign of violence to continue.

This is about the same time that in Greece the tyrants representing the Plebeians fought, often with success, against the traditional aristocracy which exploited the country.

The religious movements of poor people were established then in the neighbouring countries : the religion of the prophets with the Jews, Buddhism in India. The religious reform expressed in the *gāthās* does not stand alone. And the results of the movements are of the same type : nothing is more removed from the political organisation indicated by the Vedas than an empire like that of the great Buddhist sovereign, Aśoka.

All scholars who have studied the *gāthās* have seen that the moral conceptions there are linked to the facts of the economic and social order. But what is necessary to seek there is not the contrast between the agriculturist and the nomad; no such thing is indicated by the text; and the importance attached to the growth of the cattle does not characterise the agriculturist with reference to the nomad. One is however rather in the presence of the old opposition between the rich and the poor, the warrior aristocrats and the cultivators. It is that opposition which only can explain the main importance attributed by the ancient Zoroastrianism to the doctrine of retribution after death.<sup>1</sup>

From this point of view as from all others, the situation in which the *gāthās* remain, has nothing in common with that which the later Avesta represents.

<sup>1</sup> On these social movements see in the Review : *L'Anthropologie* (1924, p. 297 ff.), the observations made by Mauss at the *French Institute of Anthropology*, the 19th March, 1924.

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