

# The Influence of Iran on Other Countries

By Kersey Antia, 1955

“The interchange of ornamental motifs between the peoples of the earth must have been in progress since man first consciously produced decorative forms, and it is a psychological truth that such borrowed motifs invariably became modified in the process of application by the borrower.”—Fr. H. Andrews.

It is but natural that a country influences other countries, and more so in the case of Iran, as it had attained its zenith of progress, triumph and culture more than once, but what is most remarkable is its power of being more capable of influencing others than of being influenced itself—*influence of countries like Assyria, Rome, Greece and Babylonia*. For instance, we have the authority of Herodotus to assert that, during his time, Iran was susceptible to foreign influence in the matter of luxury and pleasure. Yet the ancient Iranians were more powerful in influencing others than being influenced. A subdued nation is generally liable to be influenced by a victorious people. But this is almost absent in the case of Iran. It passed through the conquests of Alexander and the Arabs, remaining Iranian to the core. According to Prof. Darmesteter, “He (Alexander) has Persianized Greece, he has not Hellenized Persia.” On the question of the Arab Conquest, he opines: “Whether it is the question of language, of religion, of literature, or of history itself, you encounter at every step in the modern period, facts, of which the origin mounts to the early times of Persia, and which as a sequel, take their real sense only from the light of old documents.”

## Introduction

These two statements from the pen of Prof. Darmesteter, besides conferring concrete evidence to the fact that the Iranians were gifted more with the power of influencing others than of imitation of others reveals all the influence of Iran on the other nations.

The subject has a very wide scope and range, from the view-point of time, place and degree. Iran was for long among the top-ranking civilized nations of the world. It had more than once occupied and ruled foreign territories. So evidently it influenced far-flung areas in the East and in the West, say, in the Far East and in the Far West.

Iran was one of the first, if not *Facile Princeps* (easily first), country inhabited after the great Ice-Ages. In the opinions of Tykes and Blanford, most

ancient Iran was very fertile, populous and prosperous. "So, it being one of the earliest or oldest countries inhabited, it is quite natural that as one of the parent countries of world, it should have influenced the countries round about (itself) and through them the whole world."<sup>+</sup> The fact of its oldness is further illustrated by the first chapter of the Vendidad, which echoes of its being the very first country created by Ahura Mazda, the Lord, secondly by its very name Aeran-Vaeja, – Vaeja means seed, or the Cradle of the Aryans, and thirdly by the mention of excessive cold, and the winter mentioned as being much longer than the summer, in the Avesta Texts. In the opinion of Mr. Pummpelly, "Iran is one of the countries which will most readily furnish an answer to the question of the relation of history and physio-geography."

Besides, Iran's position in the history of the world, both chronologically and geographically, has enabled her to influence others. Besides, the Avesta and the Pahlavi scriptures speak of Iran as being in the middle of the zone, "Khvaniratha", which itself is in the centre of the world. In his well-known work, "The Romance of Commerce," Selfridge speaks of Iran as "The Ante-chamber of the East. In its conquest of countries to its East upto the country of the Indus, it had passed on much of its civilization to the countries conquered; but even after its fall at the hands of Alexander, on account of its situation in the middle between Greece and Egypt on the one hand and the countries including India, on the other, it acted as a middle man and passed on something of the West to the East and something of the East to the West." Again the Persian Gulf is spoken of as the cradle of the Phoenicians who had made their name in commerce . All these factors made it easy for Iran to spread the influence of its civilization on other countries.

But one important point should be noted. We see evolution in the culture and civilization of Iran. Iran has always sought knowledge from wherever possible. At different times it has borrowed more or less from Assyria and Babylonia, Palestine and Arabia, Greece and Rome, as also from distant India. "Thus, at times, its influence was the resultant of its own indigenous civilization and of the civilization which it had borrowed and assimilated from other countries."

The growth of cities is associated with the growth of civilization, which itself is derived from the Latin word *Leivis* or *Leivitas* = city and city-life were present even in the time of the Peshdadian and Kayanian dynasties, and in the Achaemenian times we see them at their best. It is important to note this early advance in civilization as only an advanced and civilized nation is apt to influence other nations. Besides, the culture and civilization of Iran was by and large of an excellent order, even in the opinions of foreign observers including Flanders Patrie. This evidently formed the basis of the theme, "Influence of Iran on other countries."

Then what are the influence themselves?

Iran has deeply influenced Greece, Rome, Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, India and other adjoining countries. Among notable influences, one was of religion and in this respect the ancient Iranians are held as “The Puritans of the Old World” by Rev. Kingsley and Lieut. Moore. Even Hays, Moon and Wayland regard religion as the greatest gift of Iran to the world, civilization.

Prof. Max Muller says, “If the battle of Marathon and Salamis had been lost, and Greece had succumbed to Persia, the state religion of the empire of Cyrus, which was the worship of Ormuzd, might have become the religion of the whole civilized world. ---- and if, ‘by the grace of Ahuramazda’ Darius had crushed the liberty of Greece, the purer faith of Zoroaster might have superseded the Olympian fables.” But in the words of Prof. Darmesteter “Greece had not sufficiently conquered in his war of revenge; it is because its victory over Persia has only been a material victory and in which she herself has suffered more than the victim.”

Though the Persians lost the Battle of Marathon, the incessant strife with Greece had certainly introduced them to their enemies. Many of the books of the *Ganj-i-Shapigan* were according to the later tradition translated into Greek. This might have introduced some puritanic influence upon the Greeks, (and through them to the West) and organized a basis for Christianity. What makes the Persian wars particularly important is, according to Dr. Cushman, that they are the starting point in the motherland of the movement in the study of men and human relations. Count Gobineau says that Achaemenian Darius gave to the Greeks much that was good. He says: “Darius made great things. — All that which the Greeks learnt, all the serious things which Plato taught, all that which archaic schools practiced of masterpieces, had, at the time of Darius, its home and its prototype in the Western Asia. But that which the Romans did not know and never practiced, not even in the most celebrated reign of Antony was systematic kindness shown in governing the people.” Prof. Damesteter regards the victory of humanity (and not only of Greece) over Persia. Yet he admits of its being material, and not essentially intellectual or spiritual.

As said by Mr. Rogers, Alexander destroyed a good deal in Persia, but the Influence of Persia round about out-lived the Destruction. He says: “The things of the spirit survived the deeds of the flesh. Religion, as civilizations touchstone, out-lived the words and deeds of Kings. Zoroaster himself, his spirit, his words, his works of kindly intent, his love of animals, survived works of brutality and savagery.”

“Religion ---- is not a spontaneous growth.” For instance, while Zoroaster did found an altogether new religion, he also thoroughly reformed the older beliefs. It was evident that later religions such as Christianity and Islam were more or less influenced by the ancient ideology of Iran. Let us hear Prof. Jackson saying: “Even some great thoughts of Christianity may be found to

have been voiced likewise by Zoroaster. Even the pages of Qoran and the doctrines of Mohammed are not free from the influence of the religion which they vanquished by the sword. — The rise of the Neo-Platonics was not certainly without the influence from Zoroastrianism. The tenets of the Zoroastrian Manichaeism even disturbed Christian thought for a time. In all such cases the relations doubtless are more or less reciprocal.”

## Influence of the religion of Iran

Grambitesta Vico, a recent writer says that ancient Iran had a hand in “the scholastic succession” among the ancient nations. In this succession he places its religion in the forefront. He regards Zoroaster as one of the first teachers of the world: he instructed Berosus for Chaldea; Berosus instructed Mercurius Timegestes for Egypt; Mercurius taught Atlas, the Ethiopian law-giver; Atlas taught Cerpheus, the Thracian Missionary, and finally Cerpheus established his school in Greece. This author regards Zarathushtra as one of the “Founders of Civilization.” W. D. Whitney holds Zoroastrianism to be important for both, its intrinsic character and its consequent influence upon other countries. The fact that the old religions like Baal of Babylonia, Osiris of Egypt and Zeus of Greece are all extinct, emphasizes the importance of this religion. Moreover, these religions died, as it were, a natural death. But Zoroastrianism, in spite of terrible blows in its course, survives to-day in Iran which was ruled by a conquering nation with a strong religious sway. This influence of Religion is, as stated by Dr. Gray and other scholars, still continuing and not defunct or dead. M. Fluegel says: “No less kinship do we find with their mysticism and supernaturalism, their superstitious and notions, their hopes and fears, sayings and teachings; as if a fraction of the Western races in by-gone ages had been torn away by some social upheaval ----- We, in 1898, in Europe and America are but the continuators and successors of those once in Babylonia and Persepolis, that we are their spiritual descendants, that they are our historical ancestors and that we are but developing a civilization which they have inaugurated; that Aryan or Semitic, Asiatic, European or American, Jew, Christian or Moslem, men and woman, we are simply flourishing upon the graves of them, our predecessors; so it is in geology and so in ethics. There is cause for glory in and not for shame of such a genealogy.”

## Judaism and Christianity

The Jews were intimately connected with their Persian conquerors, both socially and culturally, for two hundred years. Five of their great leaders namely Danel, Asdrobal, Esdras, Nehemiah and Mordecai had been looked upon with much favor by the Kings who ruled in their times. A Jewess, Esther, was the favorite queen of one of them. The Jews have been at all times a highly

intellectual race, and therefore they were bound to take note of what was but too evident. They did this in regard to all their neighbors and conquerors and the Bible is a testimony of it. These references are invariably critical. To this universal practice, they made but one exception, and that is in the case of the Persians. In regard to them they have nothing but good to say. There was the best of reasons for it; for, from the time of the Pharaohs of Egypt down to our own times, no people have treated them so well as the Persians. What the Persians did for the Jews is unique in the annals of mankind. The treatment of this kind was, therefore, all the more bound to lead the Jews to study the institutions, laws and faith of their conquerors. The claim is, therefore, for a very great and completely surrounding, enveloping, and supervening influence of the Persian Monotheism, Angelology, Immortality, Soteriology, Judgment, Resurrection, Heaven and Recompense, upon the same slightly earlier development in Israel during the captivity in Babylon.

As to what difference this made in the beliefs of the Jews themselves Dr. Mills says: "While the historically more conservative party amidst the Jews, that of the Zdokians clung to the old simplicity, and opposed this growing Zoroastrianism of the masses, yet the new views, adapted as they were to appeal to the feelings of an afflicted humanity, *prevailed*, having first concentrated themselves in a sect which termed itself, or which was termed by its indignant predecessors, Pharisees, Farsee, Persians — so that, at the time of Christ, it could be said, and upon His own authority, that 'the Scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat; and it was from him 'who lived a Pharisee' that our own future hopes were chiefly handed down to us."

He proceeds, "From what source did our Lord receive the word 'Paradise', not with us also a name for Heaven, used in the most awful moment of our religious history? One word like that implies a hundred ones used in Israel, now lost to us — whence came the hundred odd other Persian words of our surviving Hebrew Bible? That hundred imply a thousand: - so in scientific history."

There is an entirely new note in words such as these in the later Isaiah: - "Let Thy dead live, let my dead body arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust;" and such as these in Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

This is something new in the religious history of Israel, and it is undoubtedly due to the influence of the Zoroastrians among whom the Jews had lived for some time before they gathered these ideas. Most Biblical scholars are agreed as to this particular development of Judaism during the Exile. If the priests of Cyrus, says Dr. Mills, conferred to the smallest degree with those of Ezra, then not only the agnostics felt its influence, "but the pre-Christian and Christian theology." And in the book of Tobit, which contains

prominently the name of an Avesta demon, we have an allusion to the “Seven Spirits” — Amesha Spentas. Moreover, one of their names is Raphael, which was popular to Iran. We have also the mention of these Seven Spirits in Zechariah (IV, 10.), and this is further expanded in Rev. V,6. There is similar development in regard to the belief in demons including Satan or the Devil as the chief of them. The book of Genesis seems to have been influenced by the first chapter of the Vendidad. The Asmodeus (Asmodia) of the Book of Tobit is probably Aeshma-daeva of the Avesta and he was the demon of Wrath and an opponent of the seven Amesha Spentas of the Gathas, and in Tobit too, he fights with the same Seven Spirits. W.R. Alger, an American author, Von Bohlen, a German writer and Dr. Martin Haug admit that Judaism after the Exile and through Judaism Christianity afterwards received an important influence from Zoroastrianism. Moreover, in addition to all these we have in Zoroastrianism from very early times the idea of been? Where the Christian? Where the Mohammedan?”

Saviors coming and restoring the world. In this matter too the Jews seem to be borrowers. What is singular in regard to this belief is that He was to be born of a Virgin, through the seed (or cell) of Zarathushtra miraculously preserved. In Vendidad, besides, we have the description of the Temptation of Zoroaster and the account given there is not very different from the one we have in the Gospels.

Dr. Mills is quite right when he says: “I assent, with very careful attention to what I say, that the capture and occupation of Babylon with its provinces by Cyrus was not only a mighty event in the history of politics and wars, but that its both results, immediate in restoring the Jewish nation, and later, in protecting and influencing its worship, were all highly incalculable. Without it, where --- as I have so often asked - would the post - Exilic, pre-Christian creed have been? - Where the Christian? Where the Mohammedan?”

According to another: “This is not all.---- But the change that took place in this religion under the influence of Zoroaster was so great as to make it a new religion almost, —. We see the full evidence of it in the Book of Job. — In view of this we might well say that the Jewish Prophets such as the second Isaiah, Daniel and the writers of many of the later Psalms, and above all Jesus Christ, were in many respects nearer to Zoroastrianism than to pre-Exile Judaism, and as such true successors of Zoroaster.”

J.E.C. Schmidt, Michaelis, Doderlin, Horst and Hufnagel generally accept this view. “Virtue is its own reward” was learned by the Jews only from the Iranians and Dr. Mills regards it as “the greatest and by far the noblest service which it (Zoroastrianism) rendered.” Canon T.K. Cheyne, a great Old Testament scholar, in his book, “The Origin of the Psalter” writes as follows:

A knowledge of this great religion is necessary to the full

equipment of an Old Testament scholar, —. How strange is it that these should have been so long neglected among ourselves. Had it not come into contact with Zoroastrianism, Israel would, historically speaking, have struggled in vain to satisfy its greatest religious aspirations. ---- and the threefold division of sins into those of thought, word and deed in Ps. XVII 3-5 is thoroughly Zarathushtrian.

Samuel Johnson says: “ — and although a flood of physical force swept its special name and organization out of being, its soul passed into Islam, Judaism and Christianity, to mould these new accessions to the same essential purposes.” It is a significant fact that abnormal symbolic beasts described by several of the Jewish Prophets and in the Apocalypse, were borrowed from Persian art. Sculptures representing these have been brought to light by the recent researches at Persepolis. What was the Manichaeism which nearly filled Christendom for a hundred years - what was it, in great past, but an influx of tradition, speculation, imagination and sentiment from Persia? The Agnostic Christians even had a scripture called “Zoroaster’s Apocalypse”. The “Wise men from the East who knelt before the infant Christ, and opened their treasures and gave him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh “were Persian Magi.”

The question discussed here is so important and of such vital significance to a true understanding of the history of Religion as a whole that no apology is needed for the quotations made from different writers on the subject.

## Zoroastrian Religion and Islam

Of course, it needs no proving that this later religion has been derived largely from both Judaism and Christianity. To make our point too short, we can say that indirectly, if not directly, Zoroastrianism contributed a great deal in the very making and shaping of Islam in the mind of the prophet himself through what he borrowed from Judaism and Christianity, both of which later religions, in short, had been deeply influenced by Zoroastrianism.

Besides, a government truly worthy of the name must be in accord with religion, thanks to the perfect union with it, is entirely a Moslem maxim. And the book from which they are taken is *not* by a Moslem legislator, but is a Pahlavi book, the *Dinkard*. The idea of Theocracy and undoubtedly the Khilafat thus are Zoroastrian influences. On the other hand, Sufism, which is one of the rarest phenomena seen in the realm of religious life and constitute the very salt of the Islamic world, is also a product of the Persian spirit. If Islam has been thus indebted to Persia for only these two things, apart from anything else, they in themselves constitute one of the greatest services that

one religion and civilization can render to another.

There was a close relation, both cultural and geographical, between Arabia, the country of the Prophet, and Persia. In addition to this, at the time of the appearance of the Prophet Mohammed, Persia had been noted for its great Empire. Prof. I. Goldziher, in his book called "The Influence of Parsism on Islam" deals with this problem at length. He admits that one may observe remarkable traces of this influence even in the language and the artistic monuments of Germany to which he belongs. The writing of history on the part of Arabs has its roots in the literature of the royal annals of the Iranians. There was such influence at work even before Mohammed's time, when the Persian culture was at the door of Arabia. The commerce of the merchants of Mecca as well as the voyage of the Arab poets brought them nearer to such an influence. Alasha is not the only poet who tried to make excursions into the Sasanian Empire. Besides the description of the city of Hira in Arabia reminds us more of Iran than of that country. We come across a great number of Iranian words and expressions in the ancient Arabic language.

The poets of pre-Islamic Arabia refer to Iran here and there, and though they show repugnance or hatred for Iranian life and manners, this affords reliable evidence of their knowledge about Iran. As early as the birth of Christ, Iranians were exploiting gold mines in Arabia. As for the influence which these Iranians could exercise on the Arab population, we may judge of it by the fact that a portion of an Arab tribe settled in Behrin, the Banu Ijl, became completely nationalized Iranians. Yemen was specially under the Sasanian influence at the time of the rise of Mohammed. We know the Persian officials by their names who exercised authority in the name of the Sasanian Kings in South Arabia in the time of the Prophet. There was no want of opportunity for the religion of Iran to act upon the thought of the Founder of Islam. It was impossible for the Prophet to be quite ignorant of the religion of Iran. And he certainly knew the Magis, for we have a passage in the Koran, wherein he places them along with the Jews and the Christians.

Moreover, even Darius has a place in the brotherhood of the Prophets. He, according to Maulana Mohammed Ali is called Zulqarnain, or the two-horned one, and so according to the Koran, he is also looked upon as the Prophet of a nation. Some identify Cyrus with Zulqarnain. Apart from this, there is very little mention of the Zoroastrian faith in the Koran itself, from which we may be justified in saying that the Prophet, at any rate, received but little *direct* influence from the Iranian faith. It is certain, had he known anything of the great Zoroaster, he would have acclaimed him also as a Prophet as great as any that he had known among the Jews.

Yet, the Zoroastrian influence over Islam has been wide and deep. In all probability, this was felt in the cultural sphere rather than in that of religion, but the latter is not lacking altogether. Prof. Darmesteter is right in saying --"In

accepting the foreign yoke, (Iran) has more transformed its conquerors than has been changed itself ---- Islam indeed as practiced in Persia is no Islam at all. It is the ancient religion of Persia clothed in Mussalman formulas." Bagdad, Basra, Bukhara etc. were the great centers of the Zoroastrian culture in the past, and it was there again that Islamic culture grew under the fostering care of the former. The fact that the Islamic Culture finds its readiest expression in the Persian language while the language used for religious purposes among the Moslems is almost invariably Arabic, also proves the same point. Besides, the Iranians created an Islamic Literature, both religious and secular, in their own language and naturally some of this was permeated by their own pre-Islamic Zarathushtrian ideas. Besides, they helped building such a literature in the Arabic itself. Eminent scholars of the West such as Von Kramer Brokelmann, Browne, Nicholson etc. have given sound evidence of this activity of theirs. This literature contained everything from poetry to grammar. Some Iranian authors in Arabic also translated some of the pieces from the Pahlavi literature and enriched it, thereby, both in ideas and in style Brohelman says that "more accurate investigation will perhaps exhibit the dependence of the Arabs on Iran even in matter of style." Similar was the case in regard to the religious literature also.

Besides all this, we should take note of the fact that one of the associates of Mohammed was an Iranian. His name was Salman-al-Farsee, formally Dastur Dinyar, a high priest of the religion of Zarathushtra. He was regarded by the Prophet as Ahal-al-Bait, meaning 'of the family of the Prophet', that is, a member of his spiritual circle. He had widely traveled in Syria, Mesopotamia and other countries, and in these countries he had studied profoundly, Judaism and Christianity. To undoubtedly he was one of the greatest scholars of his time, and so there is nothing to wonder if Mohammed loved and respected him. He had accepted Islam as his faith and it is highly probable that Mohammed was influenced by Zoroastrianism at least indirectly through him.

This influence, indeed, is almost all-embracing and for all these and for many more things, Islam and the Islamic world owe a debt to Persia, which is, however, incalculable and lasting.

## Influence of Mithraism

After Zoroastrianism, Mithraism takes its place and begins to influence Europe. It is, however, a branch of the former and not an undefiled form of it. It is not for the most part resembling the "Mithra" of the Avesta or even the "Meher Yasht". It has gone through various stages at each period of its course. An Iranian cult in origin, it has been modified, first by the Babylonian speculation in accord with the stars, then by the local cults of Asia Minor and finally by the art and philosophy of Greece. Its moral point of view somewhat

resembles the Meher Yasht. Its worship reached the thresholds of England even, and began to compete with Christianity. Weloughby regards it as “the most powerful rival,” to Christianity. M. Renan once said: “if the world had not become Christian, it would have become Mithraic.”

Yet it lives and survives today in many rites of Christianity, whose early clergy incorporated them into it and thus paved a smoother way for Christianity, but Mithraism, on the other hand, vanished and collapsed soon. It was prevalent among the Hittites and the Mittaneans. It has profoundly influenced Christianity.

For instance, (1) Sunday was held sacred by this Persian Light-God, a century or two before the Christian Era. Then the Christians followed the same track and regarded it as a holiday. (2) Mithraism has transferred much of its symbolism to the East and the West, and also to Christianity. (3) Mithra has taught many a mystery to the different institutions and guilds interested in such affairs and observing such mysteries. (4) The Christmas Day is not in reality the day of Christ’s nativity. It was afterwards adopted from Mithraism. It was the natalities of Mithra. Christ was born on January 7 (not because it happens to be my own birthday), but because to this day the Eastern Orthodox Church celebrates it as Christmas. E. Carpenter, in his book called *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, writes this: “It was not till the year 530 A.D. that a Scythian monk Dionysius Exiginus was commissioned to fix the day and year of that birth ---- The dates of the main pagan religious festivals had by that time become so popular that Christianity was obliged to accommodate itself to them.” He explains the story of the “three Magi” coming to pay homage to Christ. He explains that in the story, Christ is the Sun, the star in the heavens that guided the three Magi was Sirius (Tishtrya of the Avesta). The Magi also represented some stars. Christ’s mother also represented a star, - the Virgin, as she herself was a “virgin”. According to Frazer the Greeks celebrated this festival in a peculiar way of coming out of the shrines at midnight service and crying: ‘The Virgin has brought forth; the light is waning.’

(5) Free masonry is much influenced by Mithraism. Like Mithraism, women are excluded from its secrets. (6) J. B. Carter admits in his memorable work, *The Religious Life of Rome*, that the religious life of Rome was much influenced by it (pages 86-96). (7) To some extent it has possibly influenced Judaism too. Aleelsen regards the Jewish Mitalein as the Iranian Mithra.

But above all, none is so influenced by Mithraism as Rome. Ahuramazda was the stream of all good, whereas Ahriman is the source of all evil. Mithra was the arbitrator or mediator and always went to the side of the Light of God and kept man afar from the side of Ahriman. C. H. Moore in his work, *Religious Thought of the Greeks* opines that this cult inspired and encouraged high morality, among the Romans. He says, “Mithraism therefore was well suited to stir and energize the individual in a time when the ancient fiber of the

Romans was relaxing and when the signs of social and economic decay were evident.”

Mr. M. Yarsley's book: *The Story of the Bible*, throws much light over the subject. He refers to a Catholic theologian, E. L. Fischer and says that he “admits that Mazda, Sraosha, and Mithra constitute a trinity closely analogous to that of later Christianity.” “Christianity absorbed much of Mithraism.” He refers to baptism as having been taken from Mithraism. The book *Christian Mysteries in Mithraism* tells us that it had so much influence upon “the Christian fathers” that they “were reduced to the invention of the lame and grotesque explanation that the devil in order to do evil to the true faith, had anticipated it by imitating the Future.” Emperor Julian, only because he practiced Mithraism, was recognized by them as an apostate. But unfortunately he was slain in the battle with the Iranians, which ultimately checked its spread. The Christian Fathers have adopted their mitre and red book from Mithraism. The idea of ‘Peter figuring in the rock of Petro and breaking the double keys of heaven and hell’ is Mithraic in origin. Berger says in his article “Mithraism in Carthage” that the Christian fathers have even spread it so far as Carthage in Africa. The Christian fathers are said to have even canonized Mithra. It is so said that there was once a Mithraic shrine on the Nohron Hill. “The Pope’s predecessor, the High Priest of Mithra (called papa or father) sat in this temple in the chair of Mithra.” The Mithraic sacred chair is reportedly up to today kept in the church of St. Peters.

“By the end of the third century Mithraism bade fair to become a world religion.” Just in the beginning of the fourth century, many a Roman Emperor were devout Mithraic, but after 326 A.D. when Constantine adopted Christianity and made it the State Religion, it gradually declined and at the close of the fourth century it almost ceased to be followed.

According to Sir George Birdwood, some Zoroastrian soldiers too, who had accepted military service under the Roman army in Asia Minor, (just as the Greek soldiers served under the Persian army), where the Romans had many dominions, seem to have flown to England with the Roman army, which had conquered and ruled it for so long a time. Perhaps, these Zoroastrians might have introduced to England the rites and cults of Mithraism. “When at Cambridge in June 1925,” says Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, “my attention was drawn to a stone in its Museum of Antiquities known as the Broof stone which was supposed to be a stone in the tomb of a Mithraic soldier.” Sir George wrote to the Edinburgh Parsee Union: “In Great Britain, there are I believe, 40 contemporary monuments of ancient Persians, Zoroastrians of the Roman army of occupation in these islands; and the remains of several of them are to be found along the wall of Hadrian within a cycle sweep of Edinburgh. At St. Ives in Huntingdonshire, the abbot of Ramsay in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, dedicated a chapel to a Zoroastrian, who came to England and died here in the

7 century – possibly as a refugee from Iran when first invaded by the Arabs.”

Essenism, an old Jewish sect, was influenced by the Zoroastrian dualism. Thus, Iran which is carrying forth a very rich heritage of Aryan Culture from the very ancient time, has deeply influenced nearly the whole world in the matter of religion.

## Influence of Iranian Architecture

The Iranian Architecture in itself is a finished and excellent product of art and science. It reveals a great technical and engineering skill. It has strength, vitality, restraint, refinement, repose, and grace, and above all, “harmony with laws (whether moral, aesthetic, or scientific) in which the strength and beauty of the Universe is built up”. Thus, above other reasons, these particular qualities at its fullest may be taken as the first and foremost factor to spread its many-sided influence.

Truth and Beauty are included in that beautiful of (the most) beautiful words Asha round which, as a pivot, turn most of the aesthetic and moral structure of Zoroastrianism. No wonder, therefore, if you see these two great principles embodied in the monuments and buildings constructed by the Mazdayasnan or Zoroastrian rulers of Persia.” In his book, *A History of Architecture*, Sir B. Fletcher says: “It is their (Iranian’s) glory to have brought the arch to perfection.”

It is important to bear in mind that the Iranian Architecture had an originality of its own. Prof. T. H. Lewis and Mr. G. E. Street regard it absolutely original and in one of their articles ungrudgingly praise it as well as Iran. They are of the firm opinion that “the Persians thus ... originated a style, grand, picturesque, and in its ruins beautiful, but well-nigh isolated in the history of art, there being nothing from which it was quite copied, and nothing which seems quite to have sprung from it.” Mr. G. T. Revoira holds the Sasanian architecture as original. Count Gobineau attributes this originality to the power of assimilation of the Iranians.

In the reign of Chosroes II (Khushrow II), Iran “was able to supply other countries with workmen.”

## Indian Architecture

James Fergusson is eloquent in pointing out the origin of many of the forms of Indian Architecture to the Iranian influence. He does not even hold it as a Mystery but firmly opines: “A Mystery with regard to the origin of many of the forms of Indian architecture will be disclosed when a row of ruins of the monuments between Persia and India will b discovered. That discovery will show more clearly the influence of Iranian architecture on Indian architecture.”

Then what are those influences themselves?

We can to a certain extent trace the origin of the Jain and Saracemic styles, the great central arched doorways of some of the masjids of Gujarat, especially of Ahmedabad, the general adoption of wood in architecture, the Mauryan architecture, the capitals in the caves at Bedsa, Bhaja, Jammalgarhi, and Tatrea-gumpha, the design at Sarnath, the Stupas at Sanchi, the Saka monument in Mathura, the column of Besnapur, the Indian Mohammedan architecture., the temple of Martanda in Kashmir, the Architecture of ancient Pataliputra, and the decoration of the later Vihara caves, to the influence of the Iranian Architecture.

We may here refer them one by one. Jain and Saracemic styles. – The rosace on the Jain temples at Aleu and Girnar are wonderfully like those of the Mashita palace of Khoshru. The “peculiar conventional treatment of the vegetable forms” in these Jain marble temples is very closely resembling that on the fa?ade of the Mashita palace.

Masjids of Gujarat. – The palace of Dastagard, according to Fergusson has deeply influenced the forms of the Indian mosques. He opines that the arched door-ways of the Sasanian buildings of Khoshru are survived today in the central arched door-ways of some of the mosques of Gujarat, especially Ahmedabad.

The Use of Wood. – The use of wood in ancient Indian buildings is surely a foreign influence, especially Iranian. This is especially practiced in the great palace of ancient Pataliputra, which itself has been profoundly influenced by Iranian Architecture. The general adoption of stone for both architecture and sculptor is, in the opinion of Sir Vincent Smith, also an Iranian influence.

Mauryan Architecture. – It would be interesting to note in this connection that the origin of the Mauryan dynasty itself is traced by many scholars, -Indians too (and it has certainly not a light weight in the Indian History itself) to Iran. And it is a long-known fact that the Mauryan architecture was to a certain limit affected by the Iranian architecture, (a) Some sculptural capitals of Asoka, (b) the style of the huge monolithic sand-stone and other pillars of Asoka, and (c) the bas-relief sculpture of some Mauryan buildings are similar to those of the palaces of Persepolis.

Persepolitan *influence on Some Caves*. – According to Fergusson, the capital at Bedsa, near Sonoreala, are the most prominent in their Iranian influence. The Indian artists, by their natural aptitude, have replaced there some Persepolitan animals with certain modifications. Those at Bhaja, near the Karla caves and Jarmalgarhi, near Peshawar are nonetheless in such an influence. At the later place are some forms os Perso-Indian pillars too. The Tatua-gumpha caves, in Orissa, have also been influenced in the same way.

Sarnath. – In the words of V. Smith, “The design (at the bas-reliefs) at

Sarnath while obviously reminiscent of Assyrian and Persian prototype is modified by Indian sentiment, the bas-reliefs being purely Indian." In other words, we have here the example of the Indian sentiment taking the course of the Iranian one and running parallel to it, and not, of course, of any direct influence or result.

Stupas at Sanchi. – Dr. F. W. Thomas, appreciates the perfection in these Stupas, but does not neglect saying: "It is no doubt the fact that in all the earliest architectures of India we can trace a strong influence from Persia and Assyria."

Taka Monument in Mathura and the Column of Besnpur. – According to Sir Aurel Stein's work, "Ruins of Desert Cathay," North-Western India was much influenced by Iran through Gandhara. His work helps us in tracing the origin of the above two examples to the Iranian art. The former is of the form of a large lion, while the later is of the Persepolitan bell-shaped type. One finds undoubted Iranian influence upon both.

Although Dr. Acharya denies Iranian influence upon India, he sums up well the influence as referred to by Fergusson and others. Havel is much eloquent in his praise of Indian art in which he sees more indigenous element than any foreign one. Yet he recognizes some Iranian influence on it. Again Havel says: "It is possible that the royal craftsmen of Persepolis may have taken something from India." We do not want to doubt any such "possibility" if he proves it, but we cannot gainsay that such "possibility" cannot prove that Iranian influence itself was absent on the Indian soil; for the Iranian, Achaemenian Architecture which influenced the Mauryan one, was built up much more earlier than the Mauryan.. Once again Havel cannot gainsay that the "Iranians and Indo-Aryans were co-heirs of the Aryan tradition" and so he dares thinking that "the architecture, with symbolism of the bell-shaped capitals" was Indian and not from Iran as some think. But if we really crave for the (historical) truth and the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, such mere guess-works fall insipidly flat. For, one thing is certain and all the four Vedas bear testimony to the truth that the early Aryan emigrants were simple, rustic people living in houses, though large yet little better than huts. Even the town-life grew later on. In such a state, they are not supposed to know much about architecture, which certainly grew later on albeit to a noteworthy extent. The Persians developed another system, on the other hand, in Iran. Thus, this was an individual process. When the Aryans came to India they had not a remotest idea of bell-shaped capitals, which was introduced as a direct influence from Iran. Havel thinks that the spires of Mandirs had some connection with the ancient fire-worship. This, too, is probable only when he admits of its being a direct influence later on; otherwise it is highly doubted that such big fire-temples existed when the Aryans were living together, following for the most part the worship of nature, fire or sun openly in the nature. The Indo-Aryans earlier

followed the same practice in India.

Indian Mohammedan Architecture. – The influence of Iran in the matter of architecture is incalculable and lasting; for, it continued even after it was conquered by the Arabs. The Mohammedan Architecture in India has its root and origin in Iran. It bears Sasanian influence upon India. Mr. W. Simpson, holding the same view, gives it good treatment. He is of the view that it came as a gradual process by the route of Khorasan, Afghanistan and other parts of Central Asia. Words like Taq, Rivak and Aiwan used in Moslim Architecture of India show the influence of Iran.

Temple of Martanda. – Dr. Acharya, whom we have referred above, admits the influence upon the ancient buildings but denies it on the temples. He opines, “even the most ardent advocate of Persian theory could not think of Persian influence upon Indian temples.” There is, of course, a word of truth in his statement. But it is not a hundred percent truth. The Northern India can be taken as an exception to this rule. For instance, we have the temple of Martanda in Kashmir for which we can claim the Iranian influence as recorded by many.

Indian Pataliputra. – Dr. Spooner is much eloquent in pointing out various Iranian influences upon it. The Persians might have conquered provinces of India further east than it is usually believed and Firishta, a Moslem historian, indicates the same. If it is true, then there is little wonder if the palace of Pataliputra was but a copy of that in Persepolis. The plan of a Mauryan building, which Dr. Spooner had excavated, reminded even his wife of what she had seen in the plan of Persepolis. He soon discovered several similarities, for instance, a square hall with ten rows often columns, orientation, mason’s mark on a column, a similar distance between the columns, intercolumniation and stratification which resembles pedestals of Persepolitan type; all these had their origin or model in a Persepolitan building.

The next thought that struck Dr. Spooner was, that, if it was on a Persepolitan style, it must have a group of buildings around, as in Persepolis. “Speaking in the known Roman style of *Veni, Vedi, Vici*, we may say, he conceived, he measured and he conquered.” What we may gather from Dr. Spooner’s literacy, numismatic, and other evidences and what he himself wants to drive at is that there was much probability, well-nigh amounting to certainty, of a profound influence of Iran upon India.

Monoliths and Vihar Caves. – J. Kennedy appreciates the originality of the Indian art; yet he points out some foreign traces. He says: — as a matter of fact, most of the details were borrowed from Persia. — It survives at Bharhut and in Asoka’s monoliths, and it reappears in the caves of Western India — The borrowings in sculpture are much more numerous ----- But the debt of India to Perso-Assyrian art is most strikingly apparent.” He further says: “The

decoration of the later Vihara caves ---- was Persian; and that not so much after the fashion the Sasanians as of the Achaemenids.”

According to Dr. V.A. Smith, one of the best authorities on the History of Ancient India, style of inscriptions on pillars and rocks followed by Asoka were Achaemenian in origin; the Kharoshthi script came to India from the Aramaic clerks of the Achaemenians; some of the features of the Mauryan administration, such as the division and sub-division of the empire under the head of the satraps and polity were taken from the Iranians. Even the Achaemenian title of satrap was used up to the fourth century A.D.; some of the court customs and manners resemble those of the Persepolitan Court.

Dr. Smith opines: “Chandragupta did not need Alexander’s example to teach him what empire meant. He and his countrymen had had before their eyes for ages the stately fabric of the Persian monarchy, and it was that empire which impressed their imagination, and served as the model for their institutions, in so far as they were not indigenous.”

## **Influence of Iranian Architecture on Other Countries**

When the Persians had conquered Media, Lydia, Babylonia, Egypt and Indus Valley, and “it seemed likely that Greek civilization might be submerged in an Oriental Monarchy”, there is probability of all these countries being Persianised to a more or less extent. *Greece*-- “There were certain grand elements in it,” says G.B. Grundy, “which, through them, must have influenced Greek life. Professor Herzfeld thinks that the influence of the Iranian architecture on that of Europe began with the march of the Goths. *Rome*-- Referring to this, Professor Jackson says: “As to the imperial times, the Persian wars brought Rome into contact as they had brought the Greeks. In all such cases the relations, doubtless, are more or less reciprocal.” *Central Asia*--The recent archaeologists such as Dr. Spooner put weight on the study of the Sasanian Culture in general and of archeology and arts in particular. He even goes a step further and regrets the present nominal study of this dynasty as it is to him much important for even the historian of Christian art in the East, in the centuries before Rome’s toleration of faith, and for the genesis of much of the architectural history of the early Church. Dr. Aurel Stein’s *Ruins of Desert Cathay* explains well this matter. The type of heads on some seals of ancient Khotan is found to be Iranian. The face of a figure on a painted wooden panel seems to be Iranian. The figure of a horseman on another panel also seems to be “very Persian”. Some intaglios of Khotan are supposed to be of the Iranian origin. The people of Sarikol, in the opinion of Dr. Stein are akin to the Iranians. He adds: “But if we may judge from several important indications, settlements of an Iranian-speaking race must in ancient days have extended much further eastwards, especially in the direction of Khotan.”

*Burma*— In *The History of Burma*, Harvey says: “The Burmese kingship with its teak palace claims to derive from North India; and the ancient palaces of North India in their turn owed much to Persia.” One such example implies the existence of many. *Afghanistan*—With the advent of Buddhism to Afghanistan, we notice on its movements the influence of Iran’s art. The Buddhist sculpture here also seems to be affected. In the opinion of “*The Asiatic Review*” (of July, 1926), the relation between the official arts of the Sasanians and Buddhism can be still more expanded. And there is a word of truth in it, as the two countries are not situated afar. *Arabia*—A palace at Samara has some features akin to those of the Sasanian Ctesiphon, which is “one of the finest surviving examples of Sasanid architecture whose home is Persia.” One such example, however, implies many.

## Influence of Iranian Mazdaic Art

The influence of the Iranian art on other countries is nonetheless. It extends from the surrounding country of Byzantine to further West and from the neighboring country of India to the further East to China and Japan.

The Iranians were known as “the Middlemen” of the East. They traded with the East and by so doing, helped the spread of the art of their own country and of other countries, too. Its effect is, in the opinion of Dalton, most eloquent and apparent in Byzantine.

Similarly we find several instances of Iranian influence on the paintings of ancient Khotan. Stein says: “The real interest of the painting his, however, not in the eventual identification of the figure, but in the application of a design of essentially Persian style to a subject of Buddhist mythology. – Is it possible that this little curious little painting reflects features of a ‘Perso-Buddhist’ art such as might have developed in Balkh, that city of many splendid Viharas?”

Even traces of Sasanian painting are supposed to be present in the sculptors then known as the ‘Dukhtar-I Noshirwan’ near Rome in the river bed of Khulm, and in the Buddhist sculptures of Bamian in Afghanistan.

“In my travels in the further East in 1922, my attention was, now and then, drawn to the influence of the art of Iran upon the art of China and Japan.” One Mr. Dillon is reported to have opined about the arts of Japan thus: “Nothing is more remarkable than the undoubted presence of Persian, more precisely Sassanian, motives in a considerable number of cases.” Besides it is worthy to note a statement on the Japanese Art which runs thus: “It is considered possible that the beginnings of Japanese art were strongly affected by Persian influences.”

The Iranian influence, in this direction too, is present on the Indian soil also. Mr. Andrews says: “It is noticeable that the draperies of the Chinese

Turkistan paintings exhibit less trace of Persian influence than do those of Ajanta.” One of the Ajanta caves is mainly associated with Sasanian Persia. The Delwara Temple of Mt. Abu have also borrowed some Iranian elements from the Mashita Palace. The Moguls introduced some traits of Iranian painting in India. The Indian painting of that time was profoundly influenced by the Sasanian art of painting. For “it is a common place now that the Arabian conquest did not sweep away any dying past... The Sassanian style ... continued for generations.”

Iran seems to have influenced other countries in the matter of pottery, as this art was developed well before 3000 B.C. But what is remarkable is that the Mazdaic or Iranian art is not confined to India. The policy of the Achaemenian rulers, to a certain extent, seems to seek the unity of the most of the Aryan races. So the Iranian Culture easily spread among them. Professor Strzygowski tries to show the importance of the universal religion of Mazdaism on the Development of Art. He asserts that neither Hellenism nor Buddhism have been able to offer durable resistance to the influence of Mazdaic Art. The Hvarenah landscape which was widely prevalent about fifth century A.D. in the neighboring countries of Iran and influenced the Middle Age in Europe was of Iranian origin. He gives the examples of such influence from the wall-paintings at Pompeii and Ravenna.

Formerly, it was so held that only the Hellenistic work is the genesis of the Christian and Moslem culture. But “What Hellas was to the art of antiquity”, says Kirchenkunst, “that Iran was to the art of the new Christian world and to that of Islam”.

## **Aeran-Vaej and Arya-Vrat or Iran and India**

The Aryans of India were once living in or around Iran, and there is much similarity between the Rig-Vedic religion and the ancient religion of Iran. Some of the deities including Asura or Varuna, and forms and objects of worship are similar. The language of the Indo-Aryans, Sanskrit, is amazingly akin to the Avesta, the language of the ancient Iran. The relation of Iran with India, in all its probability, started with the advent of the Aryans in India. In the light of the present researches and opinions of the scholars of the Indian History, Dr. J.J. Modi’s opinion that the Dravidians also came to India through the West, does not seem correct. The present view (in 1958) is this that the Dravidians came somewhere from Australia, and gradually covered the whole of India, including Baluchistan, from where they managed to run to the further West.

Thus, the relation between India and Iran started a stage later, yet the importance of the Iranian influence upon India stands - and that with equal weight.

One of the Aryan races mentioned in the later Rig-Veda is Parthava, which reminds us of Iran and is comparable to Pahlava. "The Sakas who invaded India were Iranians of the later Parthian times." The Kushan King Kanishka (78 A.D.) is reported to have brought to India some Magas, who were Iranian Mobeds. Their Jarazaste referred to in the Bhavishya Purana is Zarathushtra. The Huns and Gurjars who invaded India came through Iran. Mihirgula, the Hunu King, also introduced Magas. India is also referred to in the Avesta. We know of the Indian conquest of the Achaemenians, and from the *Shah-Nameh*, of the Sasanids.

Varahmihir, a gem in the court of Vikramaditya, is taken by some to be an Iranian. Besides, even the Parsees are referred to in the Vishnu Purana. In the Mahabharata and Mudra Rakshash, the Persians are referred to. Taxila, just before and after the Christian Era, was ruled by the kings, Persian in origin.

There were many Persian satraps in India. Of late, some German scholars, opine that the Iranians and Germans too had a hand in writing the Rig-Veda. The second, fifth and seventh books of it show the influence of the Iranians. Some of the influences we have already seen.

If the relation between these two countries was worthy of notice, so was the influence of Iran upon the other countries. After the decline of the Maurya dynasty, Bactria and Parthia invaded India and this helped them to introduce their coins there. The Indian coins were greatly influenced by the Persian coins, as they were inferior in design and quality.

We should not forget the influence of the Iranian Mohammedans upon India and above all, of the Parsees, the followers of the old Iranian faith in India. Mr. H. Beveridge says that they "did the same service to India as the Huguenots did to England. They introduced new arts and sciences and enriched the blood of the Indian nations." To quote Herbert Casson, "What a wonderful influence for good the Parsis have been in Bombay! ... they have promoted efficiency, prosperity, morality, and spiritual development. They are high-quality people. We should not undervalue the influence of a small group of superior people in a town or a nation."

## Miscellaneous

The Bahmani Kingdom of the Southern India in the Medieval Age calls our special attention, as its founder, Hasan Gangu himself, declares himself on his coins to be a descendant of Bahmon, son of Asfandiyar-bin-Gushtasp of the Kyanian dynasty of Iran. Thus, we have a direct influence of Iran in the Deccan too.

The religion, language, script, theology, idea of Redemption, baptismal lustrations, priesthood, calendar, dress, funeral 'feasts', doctrine of

metempsychosis, rites, cults, dogmas, customs, places of worship and the outlook of life of the Mandaeans is surprisingly similar to those of the Iranians. Some regard them as an offshoot of the Iranian race. They ran down all the peoples save Zoroastrians. So, unlike Manichaeans, they might be an offshoot from, or a sect of Zoroastrianism. Any how, we have here a great instance of the influence of Iran.

Professor Goldzieher recognizes the influence of the Sasanian Iran upon the language and grand species of art of his own country, Germany. The crusades had brought the Germans in contact with the East. Many of the Iranian episodes are the themes of German poetry. Parsee-Nameh and Parsee song are the subjects of some of the German writers. Besides, they have profoundly studied the Avesta and Pahlavi languages and texts. All these are enough to startle us, once.

The influence of Iran on gardening is also a prominent one. It has its root in the teachings of Zarathushtra, who declared that “whosoever sows corn, causes righteousness to be practiced”.

The Greeks, too, are influenced by Iran in secular matters. Aristotle and Theopompus were more or less familiar with Zoroastrian tenets, and allusion to Zarathushtra are not infrequent in classic writers. Their knowledge about him is, however, meager and inaccurate. Professor Jackson says, “Plato, Pythagoras and other great thinkers are claimed to have emulated the teachings of the Great Magi (Zoroaster), and the later Moslem or Zoroastrian tradition asserts that the ancient sacred writings of Iran, the quintessence of all knowledge, were translated into Greek.” Coinage, undoubtedly, was used on a grand scale in Iran, from where it went in other directions to establish itself on various soils.

According to Glotz, from Iran and other countries, “the practice of striking coins was quickly communicated to Europe. In less than a century, it was adopted in the greater part of the Greek world.” Thus we can trace the Iranian influence upon the Greek literature, philosophy and coinage.

One of the contributors of Iran to the world civilization is Postal arrangements. In by-gone days this system proved beneficial to large kingdoms or empires to maintain law and order in remotest parts and was so adopted by many of them.

Iran gave the world the idea and system of imperial government. Never before had history recorded so extensive an area brought under one control. “The Persian empire was the most successful experiment on imperial government that the Mediterranean world would know before the coming of Rome.” Persia’s methods of government were largely adopted by Alexander in organizing his eastern conquests. The Mauryans too, had adopted it.

Iran gave the world a good road system. The road system of Cyrus and

Darius served as a model to the Europeans who conquered Western Asia.

The Kharoshthi and Aramaic scripts of Iran are found even on the Indian coinage.

The Iranian cookery affected Europe also. Sir G. Birdwood opines: "All our cookery as an art ... comes from ancient or Zoroastrian Persia."

Alexander Chodzko traces the influence of Iranian Poetry to the Turkoman Turks.

In the department of medicine too, the challenge of the Iranian influence does not go altogether unchallenged. Probably Iran gave not only its own medicine but also that of India and perhaps of Egypt to the Medical School of Hippocrates, the founder of Greek medicine. *The New York Medical Journal* (of September, 1925) says: "... the close reader, familiar with Zend Avesta and the Rig-Veda cannot fail to trace the Oriental influence which came through them (the Iranians) to the Western World."

We have already seen the influence of Iran upon Arabia and its poets in a previous chapter on Islam.

Some of the Indian stories such as Bodhisatva, Panchatantra, Upanis had went, through the way of Iran, and with some addition of Iran, to the West. The origin of Barlaam and Yewasef is traced to this influence.

Iran has influenced Europe in varied matters through Byzantine.

Prominent among all of them is the influence of social etiquette. Sir G. Birdwood recognizing it, adds: "It was this 'Persian apparatus' of social etiquette that taught the Barbarians who overthrew Rome good manners and made us gentlemen." Some of the court customs of the Mauryans were akin to those of the Achaemenians, such as Birthday Parties, and custom of keeping long hair and beard. The latter was not only observed by the kings but also by the people. In both the courts; chaplains had a dignity inferior only to that of the kings.

Besides these, the Achaemenians, precisely speaking, Darius I, had attempted to join the Nile of Egypt and the Red Sea. According to Herodotus, who was in Egypt thirty years after the death of Darius and saw the canal actually being constructed, tells us that Darius succeeded in his task. But later classical writers doubt the veracity of his assertion. But the discovery of the six monuments of Darius near the present Suez Canal are now authentic testimony of the existence of such a successful construction of Darius. Thus the relation of Iran with other countries, especially of the West, might apparently be very intimate, and so might be its influence upon them subsequently.

Some scholars have tried to show some relations between Cashmere and the ancient Iran.

According to some scholars, Dante's "Divine Comedy" was much influenced by the Iranian *Arda-Viraf Nameh*, and the mystic language of Ireland and other countries owed debt to Iran.

It is interesting to note that Socialism was first introduced to the world by an Iranian, Mazdak by name.

Though there was monarchy in Iran, the need of the people's approval was not overlooked. In the early rule of the Peshdadians, we notice the germ of democracy in the dethronement of Zohak. Even in the Zoroastrian prayers we come across the repugnance for bad kings. This concept of monarchy seems to have affected the Mauryans also and Chanakya's work on Indian polity is eloquent in pressing the need of the sanction of people if monarchy is to be enduring. We hear of an Iranian, more precisely speaking of a Parthian Emperor Mithridatis as a founder of Iranian Parliament. Thus, if the Greeks and Romans later on learned lessons in democracy and benevolent monarchy, from Iran, and through them the West, we can well imagine of the influence of Iran on other countries in almost all the fields of human activity.

We do not surprise much, therefore, when Gibbon traces the origin of "almost all the flavors, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens" to Iran, among other countries of the East.

With the increased researches in this direction, more facts which up to now lie concealed will be brought to light.

But all this is ample to show how the Iranians tried to drop the little bits of Iran (as well as of other countries too) down in so many countries of the world. This is a noble example of how a country can influence other peoples and smoothen the path of civilization and progress of mankind. Here is a pious account of the influence of Iran on other countries; "pious", because the influence is always in the harmony with goodness and upliftment of humanity. Amen!