

Handwritten text in a rectangular box on the dark red cover, likely in a script such as Gurmukhi or Devanagari.

THE HYMNS
OF
ATHARVAN ZARATHUSHTRA

BY
JATINDRA MOHAN CHATTERJI, M. A.

THE PARSİ ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Parsi Zoroastrian Association has great pleasure in presenting to the public this monumental work by Sri Jatindra Mohan Chatterji.

Sri Chatterji was born in 1889 in the village of Sungar, District Dacca now in East Pakistan and obtained his M.A. degree from the Calcutta University in 1912. He joined Government service in 1917 and served in the district of Murshidabad from 1924 to 1929. At about this time he became interested in the study of the Zoroastrian Religion and the message and teachings of its Founder. It speaks volumes for Sri Chatterji's perseverance and scholarship that he taught himself Gujrati and Persian in his search for a deeper understanding of the subject.

About 35 years ago, Sri Chatterji published "The Ethical Conception of the Gathas" and a translation of the Gathas which is now out of print. This latter work included a Gujrati section compiled by the late Sri Ardeshir Nusserwanji Bilimoria, who used to publish a monthly magazine "Cherag" from Navsari in Gujrat. Sri Chatterji has published other books in Bengali on the life and teachings of Zarathushtra and short commentaries on the Gathas as well as on the gospels of Guru Nanak and Govinda Singh.

The present volume is truly Sri Chatterji's *magnum opus* and is the product of a lifetime of devoted study of the Gathas and the religion of Zarathushtra. The Association makes no claim that this commentary is infallible and scholars may

disagree very strongly with a particular view taken by Sri Chatterji. This does not, in any way, detract from the value of this publication ; on the contrary, the Association feels certain that this work is indeed a notable contribution to the literature on the subject. The opinion of Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj, a great authority on Sanskritic studies is given below, as being relevant on the point :

"In view of the fact that serious studies on a comparative basis of ancient religious traditions, embodied in the Vedic and Avestan literature, are very rare, the value of the present work can hardly be over-estimated. I cannot speak with authority on the subject, but it seems to me that the work is the result of wide studies carried on during an entire lifetime and reveals depth of thought and extraordinary insight.

To many some of his conclusions may appear to be new, but that is probably the best reason why the subject matter should be critically investigated by specialists and carefully discussed with an unprejudiced and open mind.

The author believes that the Vedic culture had two lines of development—one associated with Bhṛigu representing the Asuras and the other with Angiras standing for the Devas. What is generally known under the name Zend Avesta is, in his view, Bhargava Veda. The Avesta comprises four Samhitas or collections of Hymns, the chief of which is called by the name of Yasna. Seventeen Hymns of this Samhita are usually designated as Gatha. The author thinks that this important

section of the Avesta is in a sense the original work on which Sufism, as a cult of Divine Love, was ultimately based. The Divine in this cult is looked upon as the Beloved, and the human soul as the Lover. It is analogous to the *Raga Marga* of the mediaeval Vaishnavas.

Sri Chatterji believes that neither Greek culture nor Vedanta or Islam in any of its forms, had anything to do with the origin of Sufism, which is a logical filiation of the early Gatha culture of Divine Love. The secret of this *Sadhan* lies in self-dedication to the Divine in a spirit of loving surrender.

The learned Introduction of the author contains much that is worth knowing and deserving of our serious attention. Even criticisms are helpful in the investigation of Truth. I hope the work will receive a wide publicity among scholars, especially among serious students of Comparative Religion."

Sri Chatterji is a modest and humble man and lives quietly at Barasat in the 24 Parganas District of West Bengal. This Association is proud to have been given the opportunity to publish this labour of love from one who is indeed a worthy disciple of the noble Prophet of Iran.

The Association also wishes to express its grateful thanks to Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, for his gracious message which appears in this book.

The Parsi Zoroastrian Association
1, Saklat Place,
Calcutta-13.
April, 1967



Rashtrapati Bhavan,
NEW DELHI-4
January 24, 1967

I am happy to learn that the Parsi Zoroastrian Association, Calcutta, is shortly publishing a treatise "Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra" comprising of 35 years research work on the Avesta by Shri Jatindra Mohan Chatterji. I am sure this publication will prove a valuable contribution towards the study of the Avesta in the light of Vedic literature, and I send my best wishes for its success.

S. Radhakrishnan



ADDITIONAL NOTES :

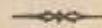
P. xviii, line 31 : The term *Parsu* was applied to the land as well as to its people, vide Panini 5-3-117 (पश्चादि शीवेयादित्वा अन् अकौ)

The Bihistan inscription calls the land *Parsa* (Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 3)

P. cxii, line 7 : Muhammad had not foreseen the great influence which his doctrine would have on the Persians. He did not know that he had borrowed many Zoroastrian ideas ; he believed that their source was Jewish and was unaware that the Koran was, so to speak, a second edition of the Zend Avesta. It was precisely this lack of originality which favoured the spread of Islam in Persia—Dozy (Claud Field—Persian Literature, p. 88)

P. cxvii, line 14 : It may also be remembered that a correct interpretation of the Koran is not an easy task. H. A. R. Gibb, in his 'Arabic Literature' observes (p 13) : "An Arabic text contains only seventy five percent of the meaning and the remaining twenty five percent has to be supplied by the reader".

P. cxxiv, p. 22 : Jalaluddin Rumi came from the purest Iranian stock, the royal line of Khwarezm (Khiva)—Claud Field—Persian Literature, p. 117.



ERRATA

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
iii	1	नवः	नेवः
xxv	11	चक्ष	चक्षु
xxvi	17	between	between iconism and
xxvi	22	Varuna	Varuna is
xxxvi	21	वृषन्ति	वृषन्ति
xl	4	पद्यम्	पद्यम्
xlili	13	son Siva	son of Siva
xliv	last	देवान्धसा	देवाङ्गसा
xlvi	10	भूत्या	भूत्वा
lii	25	अचक्षुः	अचक्षुः
lxxvii	15	मते	मृते
lxxxvi	28	Nevita	Nivita
cix	5	ledcal	called
cxix	10	not	note
cxxv	25	Manlavi	Maulavi
cxvii	21	iove	love
cxvix	29	if	is
cxlii	20	Shatra	Shastra
cli	7	aborbing	absorbing
cli	9	Vaishna	Vaishnava
cliii	18	sared	sacred
cliii	20	it	is
cliii	21	renuion	reunion
cliv	2	Safism	Sufism
cliv	27	Japarnama	Jafarnama
clvi	10	not be	not
clvi	14	spead	spread
clviii	26	like	life

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
10	18	क्रियाधीपपदस्य	क्रियाधीपपदस्य
23	6	त्यद्	त्वद्
28	19	<i>This line should come after line No 20</i>	
32	26	षु ... युवति	षु ... युवति
35	11	manram	mantram
42	18	राजन्तागिषु	राजन्तादिषु
46	11	developped	developed
64	6	वायरते	वावरते
64	11	Horizontal	perpendicular
71	14	मुजोपाम्	मुजोपाम्
92	6	beautsfully	beautifully
118	9	translator	translators
127	15	कार्म — प्रवचनीय	कर्मप्रवचनीय
127	20	in	is
157	6	चक्षुणा	चक्षुषा
173	9	haoitat	habitat
187	3	service	service of
201	10	overt he	over the
223	12	त्यक्	त्यक्
233	7	क्षधा	क्षधा
239	6	edterminate	exterminate
252	4	मधमवतः	मधवतः
262	15	उज्ज्वलं	उज्ज्वलं
268	2	वराव्य	वेराव्य
276	16	दा	दाश
286	6	वप्राति	रप्राति
299	17	triump,	triumph

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
300	2	इहा	इच्छा
304	15	खफुस्त्राः	खफुस्त्राः
314	17	स्रवस्	स्रवस्
323	11	यस्नै	यस्मै
335	last	my	to my
336	2	अदनो	अमन्ये
"	14	अवयि	अवति
337	3	अत्रि	अत्रि
339	last	च्यीत्रं	च्यीत्रं
343	18	enterting	entering
347	28	निवृत्ति	निवृत्ति
349	22	तन्वाः	तन्वाः
360	9	हायते	दायते
362	9	wealking	wealking
368	5	भा	दा
374	10	तादथ	तादर्थ्ये
387	13	rom	from
405	22	mnsic	music
429	7	इष्कृतं	दुष्कृतं
430	10	ovoid	avoid
436	1	वह्	वभ्
436	8	थ is stopped	थ is not stopped
440	13	anp	and
442	19	म-मलभ्यो	हु-मलभ्यो
443	11	यम एवप	यम् एवप
470	18	दीव्यथ्ये	दीव्यथ्ये
488	5	previlage	privilege
491	10	खु	यु

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
494	19	conciour-ness	consciousness
500	4	repells	repels
508	22	excellance	excellence
510	Last	scif	self
511	26	शास+ए	शास्+त्र
533	24	क्षमा	क्षमा
537	2	nonchalancen	nonchalance
543	15	Athurvan	Atharvan
548	4	to	to everybody
"	5	everybody)	delete
549	1	us ne	alone
550	3	n	in
555	last	paseive	passive
556	2	वक्य	वदुय
561	1	अनपस्मं	अनपस्मं
"	2	अप-अपस	अपस्-अपस्
562	24	<i>This line should be deleted</i>	
583	21	not	is
592	8	क्षयन्स्	क्षयन्स्
"	23	devine...denging	divine...denying
594	20	द्वितीया	द्वितीया by
603	9	least	least
604	5	भावाद्धं	भावाद्धं
"	21	reconciliation	reconciliation
605	20	Sankarities	Sankarites
608	11	virtous	virtuous
613	9	choicer	choice
617	19	दुर् (दुर्)	दुर् (दुष्ट)

Page	Line	Incorrect	Correct
619	13	confind	confined
625	10	इह + यत्	इह + यत्
635	1	hass is	basis
652	15	excellance	excellence
660	8	इक्ष - इक्ष	इक्ष - इक्ष
662	last	क	क
668	10	analagy	analogy
669	2	receptient	recipient
670	12	अदुर	अदुर
678	1	yield	yield
685	6	वित्तमोहन	वित्तमोहेन
689	9	may	my
693	11	उज्ज्वलेषु	उज्ज्वलेषु
699	2	holines	holiness
710	6	comaradeship	comradeship
731	13	मर्त्यौ	मर्त्यौ
744	23	भर्तस्य	भर्तस्य
768	11	राष्ट्रावपारात्	राष्ट्रावपारात्
768	18	ध्रुवा	ध्रुवा
779	17	ध्रु	ध्रु
793	16	ध्रुव	ध्रुव
803	15	शिरस	शिरस
806	20	इच्छानि	इच्छानि
808	22	इ	इ
810	14	tolarate	tolerate
813	2	vet	yet
821	2	यवत्	यवत्
822	22	नपुंसके	नपुंसके

INTRODUCTION

विदुषु टे विद्या मुननानि तस्य

ता प्रवर्षीपि वरुणाव वेधसु—Rigveda 4-42-7

All the worlds know Him ; only some call Varuna by the name "Vedhas".

The Veda is the oldest book in the world's library. Antiquity is claimed also for the papyrus rolls of Egypt but they do not go so far back as five thousand B. C. This is the time when the composition of the Veda started, as Tilak, the great Vedic scholar has proved on astronomical data¹. Moreover, the papyrus rolls are mere scrolls and fragments and not a complete book like the Veda².

The Veda originally consisted of three books viz (1) the Rik or the book of poetry (2) the Yajus or the book of prose and (3) the Saman or the book of songs³. The Rigveda is the original book ; Yajus and Saman are merely liturgical compilations⁴.

To these three Vedas was subsequently added the supplementary Veda or the Atharva Veda⁵.

The Atharva Veda consists of two books, the Bhargava Samhita and the Angirasa Samhita. This is why the Atharva Veda, the double-barrelled name of Bhrigu-Angirasi Samhita (सुवर्गिरसी संहिता) has been given by the Gopatha Brahmana⁶.

1. Tilak—Orion P. 206

2. Dhirendranath Pal—Religion of the Hindus P. 1.

3. Jaimini—Purva Mimansa (Sutras 2-1-32 to 2-1-34)

4. Griffiths—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, Preface, P-2.

5. i) Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature P. 196

ii) Bloomfield—Atharva Veda and Gopatha Brahmana P. 56

6. Bloomfield—Hymns of the Atharva Veda—Introduction P. 23

Unlike the three original Vedas which derive their names from the nature of the composition, these two books derive the names from their authors¹.

It is to be noted that the two supplements are not the two parts of the same book as is sometimes wrongly supposed by some persons, who take the current Indian Atharva Angirasa Veda to be the whole of the Atharva Veda. These are two separate books. This is why the Gopatha Brahmana counts the number of the Vedas to be five—by adding Bhargava and Angirasa Vedas to the original three—Rik, Yajus and Saman. The Bhargava Veda is required to be added in order to make the number five². The Mahabharata also states the number of the Vedas to be five. Vyasa taught the four Vedas to his four disciples and the fifth Veda to his son.

चत्वारसु ते वरुं शिवाः गुरुपुत्रस्तु षष्ठमः

इह वेदाः प्रतिष्ठेरज एव नः कथितः परः

—Santi Parva 335-40

Some people may be inclined to think that the Bhargava Veda is an imaginary book—imagined out of the appellation Bhrigu-Angirasi Samhita. Such supposition is unjustified. The Iranian name of the book is Avesta. To Panini the book was quite familiar even in its Iranian name. To him, the word *अवसा* was so important, that he felt himself called upon to compose a separate Sutra (1-9-25) for its derivation. There is no doubt that the Avesta is the scripture of Ahura-worship. And the preceptor of Ahura-worship is, in India, called Bhrigu. There should not therefore be any doubt that the Avesta is the scripture of Bhrigu and that its Indian name would more aptly be Bhargava Samhita. To fail to see in the Avesta the Scripture of Bhrigu, is to be blind to actual

1. Griffith—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, Preface, p. L.

2. i) Bloomfield—Atharva Veda and Gopatha Brahmana, p. 8

ii) Bloomfield—Hymns of the Atharva Veda, Introd. section p. xxii.

facts. नयः स्यान्नोरु अपराधः वदु एतं अन्धो न पश्यति (Sayana)—it is not the fault of the stick that the blind man does not find it. It is like the wiseacre of the fable of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, who saw the house of his neighbour burnt down, but refused to believe in its truth, for want of an authenticated report about it in any newspaper.

अयं सुषुप्तोऽहं वेदोऽहं वर पापं वन्दु

तां न वदु इमं गुणं नगरदी अयं लघनु

Masnavi 8-309

Ye fool, tie a rope round your leg. Otherwise you will miss yourself (fail to recognize yourself to be you) in the crowd.

We do not want to miss the Bhargava Veda—for want of a report in the newspapers.

The Bhargava Veda and the Angirasa Veda came into existence after the Indo-Iranians became divided on the question of monotheism and idolatry. Bhrigu or Shukra is the priest of the Asuras (i. e. worshippers of Asura). The Asuras emphasised the importance of monotheism and aniconic (निराकार) worship. Angirasa or Brihaspati was the priest of the Devas (i. e. worshippers of Deva). These people were not so punctilious on these points.

The popular name of the Bhargava Veda is Zend Avesta. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of the word Zend. Some say that it is the name of the language in which the Avesta is written. Others say that the word means 'commentary', and Zend Avesta means Avesta along with its commentary (Avesta ba Zend). It would thus appear that 'Avesta' is the principal word and 'Zend' only qualifies it.

Zend corresponds to the Sanskrit term छन्द, छन्दस् is another name for the Veda, as the Medini Kosha says छन्दः पद्ये च वेदे च स्वराचारमिहाशयोः । And छन्द is a variant of छन्दस् by the Vartika कोर, अन्धोर, ठोप (vide Katantra Chanda Sutra by

Chandra Kanta Tarkalankara). The Vartika says that vedic nouns often drop the final *त्* and *न्* optionally. Thus *छान्द* means Vedic and *उपस्था* means a hymn, as stated by Panini (*उपान् मन्त्रकरणे* 1-8-25). And so *छान्द उपस्था* (Zend Avesta) means a Book of Vedic hymns. The word was so important to Panini that he had to compose a separate rule for its derivation, inspite of the fact that Sanskrit grammarians would not add even half a syllable if that could be helped (*अर्धमात्रात्तावत्वेन पुत्रोत्सर्गं मन्वन्ते वैयाकरणाः*) ।

The Avesta is divided into four books (1) Yasna—the book of hymns (2) Yasta—the book of prayers (3) Visparatu—the book of universal prayers and (4) Vidadvadata—the book of laws. The Yasna is the main scripture and the other three books are subsidiary to it. There are 72 chapters in the Yasna. 17 Chapters out of them go to form the Gatha. They are reputed to be the words of prophet Zarathushtra himself, just as the Gita is reputed to be the words of Govinda Krishna himself. The Gatha is embedded in the Yasna, as the Gita is included in the Mahabharata.

The Gatha is the cream of the Avesta. It teaches all those noble principles which Maha-Ratu Zarathushtra wanted the people to learn. Even if all three other books are by some accident lost, the Parsis would still be able to reclaim themselves with the help of the Gatha alone. If the Gatha is lost, all is lost; if the Gatha remains nothing is lost. The Gatha is to the Parsi what the Gita is to the Hindu, the Dhammapada to the Buddhist, the Uttar-Adhyayana Sutra to the Jain and the Japji to the Sikh. It is as important to the Parsi as the Lord's prayer is to the Christian, and the Surat-ul-Fatiha to the Muslim. It brings him hope in life and consolation in death.

The word Gatha comes from the root *ग*—to sing. This celestial song is the message of Maha-Ratu Zarathushtra, the first and the foremost Prophet of mankind. First, because we know of no other prophet, Aryan, Semitic, Chinese or of any other race, who is earlier to Zarathushtra. No doubt

there had been some vedic sages who are earlier to Zarathushtra, because Deva-Yasna was current when Atharvan Zarathushtra came into the world, but they had composed only stray hymns; none had composed a systematic scripture—an Upanishad. And Zarathushtra is foremost because the gospel that he brought (the Gatha) is the earliest scripture of the Chishti cult, which (under the name of Sufism) is still the fascination of India and Iran; and Religion is said to be the most conspicuous contribution of these two countries to the world ¹.

Atharvan Zarathushtra may be said to be still reigning over Asia in spite of all appearances to the contrary, in spite of the smallness of the number of persons who to-day profess Zarathushtrianism. For the multitude that follow his ideal unconsciously (i. e. without the knowledge that it is Zarathushtra's ideal that they are following) is vast indeed. They would turn to Zarathushtra if only they came to learn that it is nothing but the ray of the sun that is reflected by the moon. Jalal, the apostle of Sufism, conveys the suggestion (of turning to the sun of sufism) in guarded language.

शमस चुन आलीतर आमद खुद ज माह
 १२ जिया अज नुर अफकून दान ब जाह

Masnavi 4-20

Leave the crescent; turn to golden sun (*कस्* = golden *रश्मि* = sun).

It was about 3500 B. C. that Maha-Ratu Zarathushtra was born in Iran. Even in very early youth this exalted messenger of God took up the challenge of religion. He found around himself worshippers of Varuna, who stuck to monotheism and laid considerable importance on moral character. He found around him worshippers of Indra, who were less scrupulous about monotheism and less careful about the place of morality in religious discipline. Both the parties

1. Griswold—God Varuna in the Rigveda P. 4.

however asserted that God (Varuna or Indra) could be seen and that the highest object of life was to see God.

Zarathushtra wanted to know for himself. He would see God, if God was visible and hear Him, if He was audible. He would learn from Rudra (Lord) Himself, the best way of realising Him.

At the age of twenty Spitama Zarathushtra left his parents' home and went up to the Sabilan hills, standing by lake Urumia. He took up a life of hard sadhana (discipline) and deep meditation, determined to get at the truth, or lose his life in the attempt. It is said that when the yearning has reached such poignancy that the aspirant cannot relish any other desire except the desire of God, cannot cherish any other thought except the thought of God, the ground has been prepared for the vision of Mazda and Mazda now hastens to the devotee.

The ardent zeal of Asho Zarathushtra did not fail to evoke response from the Highest Lord. If it had failed, all talk about God and religion would have been mere myth. For there had not been a soul, more serious, more zealous and more holy. Ahura Mazda made his appearance to the Holy Prophet, and taught him all the secrets of religion and these are embodied in the Gatha.

Age of the Prophet

There has been a long controversy about the time when the great prophet of Iran flourished. Attempt has been made to drag down his age to one thousand B. C. Unfortunately the two premier Iranologists, Jackson and Browne, support this view. Their opinion carries considerable weight and there is a tendency to accept this date as final. But even great Homer sometimes nods and it is worthwhile to examine the soundness of the reasonings on which this opinion is based. The reasons put forth by Jackson are mainly two, viz

1. That all the Arabic historians agree that Vistaspa, who was the first patron of the Zarathushtrian church, is the

same person as Hystaspas, the father of Darius, who flourished about 800 B.C. This view, if accepted, brings the age still lower by 200 years.

2. That there is a tradition amongst the Parsis, that Asho Zarathushtra flourished 800 years before the expedition of Alexander. This would bring down the date by another 200 years.

Now Koran is the earliest book in Arabic language,¹ Koran began to be composed about 610 A.D. and all Arabic histories are subsequent productions. Thus even accepting 1000 B.C. to be the age of the holy prophet, these historians are separated from Zarathushtra by 1600 years and considerable reliance may not be placed on their accuracy.

As regards the alleged Parsi tradition, there is also another Parsi tradition (also noted by Jackson) that Spitama Zarathushtra had flourished six thousand years before the time of Alexander. No reason has been stated by Jackson why one tradition should be preferred to the other.

Jackson himself is not satisfied that Hystaspas, the father of Darius, is the same person as Vistaspa, the patron of the Zarathushtrian church. Except the similarity between the two sounds, there is no other data for establishing the identity. On the other hand the names of all the predecessors and successors of Hystaspas are quite different from the names of the forefathers and lineal descendants of Vistaspa. Then again a considerable time must have elapsed, before the loose "Ahura Mazda" (which form was current at the time of Vistaspa) changed into composite "Ahuramazda" (which is the form current in Achaemenian times).² All the same, Jackson bases his conclusion on these two flimsy data—viz the similarity in the sounds of Hystaspas and Vistaspa, and the alleged Parsi tradition—and holds the age of Zarathushtra to be one thousand B.C. We can only say that this is very unfortunate.

1. 1) Browne—Literary History of Persia Vol I p. 271

2) Gibb—Arabic Literature p. 25

3. Jackson The Prophet of Ancient Iran—p. 115

The argument of Browne is stranger still. He does not enter into the merit of the question. His only premise seems to be that the opinion of a scholar like Jackson should not be easily rejected.¹

Thus in spite of the authority of the two greatest Iranologists, 1000 B.C. as the age of the Prophet rests ultimately on the arbitrary identification of Hystaspas with Vistaspa. Not that there are not other scholars, like Haug, Geldner and Geiger, who claim great antiquity for Atharvan Zarathushtra,² but Browne has lumped them all together and rejected them all on the ground that they are misguided by race prejudice. They were out to establish the superiority of the Aryans at the cost of the Semitics.³

But Browne forgets that race prejudice is a double-edged sword. Just as it may lead some few to claim a false antiquity for Zarathushtra, it may lead some others to deny the true antiquity.

Let us try to have a peep into the mind of Dr. Browne. About the relative worth of the Avesta and the Koran he remarks: "My appreciation of the Quran grows the more I study it and endeavour to grasp its spirit; the study of Avesta, save for philological, mythological or other comparative purposes leads only to a growing weariness and satiety."⁴

There will be many men who find it a bit difficult to fall in line with Dr. Browne. Schopenhauer for instance says about the Koran: "we find in it the saddest and the poorest form of theism" (The World as Will and Idea. Vol II. P. 261) and about the Gatha, Moulton remarks: "The Prophet was in deadly earnest and he preached on great themes and spiritual fervour can make literature malgre lui even under unfavourable circumstances" (Early Religious Poetry of Persia P. 84). The

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol I, p. 130

2. Pour-i-Davoud—Translation of the Gatha, Preface p. 16

3. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol I p. 29

4. Browne—Literary History of Persia, Vol I, P. 102

poetry of the Gatha is certainly very sublime. A hymn like Sukta 44 of the Gatha does not suffer in comparison with the poetry of any religion or any language. Yet that does not suit the taste of Dr. Browne. One would be glad to be assured that Dr. Browne is free from all taint of race-prejudice.

Let us therefore throw away this double-edged sword in deciding the issue and look at the matter with the eye of the plain man not over-burdened with an excessive dose of academic erudition.

The broad fact remains that the Veda and the Avesta are very intimately related to each other. The affinity of the oldest form of the Avesta language with the Vedas, is so great in syntax, vocabulary, diction, metre and poetic style, that by the mere application of the phonetic law, whole Avesta stanzas may be translated word for word in Vedic, so as to produce verses, correct not only in form but in poetic spirit as well¹

"The coincidence between the Avesta and Rigveda is so striking as to indicate that the two languages cannot have been long separated before they arrived at their present condition"². The affinity between them is so great, that each of them has been said to be "a commentary on the other"³.

Thus the age of the Avesta cannot be dragged down without at the same time dragging down the age of the Veda. If Avesta was composed in 1000 B.C. the Rigveda also must have been composed about that time. Such an idea is so grotesque that no one would like to make himself ridiculous by propounding such a theory at this hour of the day. Ages must have elapsed before the language of the Rigveda passed through the stages of Brahmana, Aranyaka, Upanishad, Sutra and Mahabharata and turned into the vernacular of Gautama Buddha in the sixth century B.C. To compress these ages into four hundred years (1000—600 B.C.) is beyond the capacity of even Aladdin's djinni, not to speak of an Iranologist.

1. Mandonell—Vedic Mythology p. 7

2. Cambrige History of India—Vol I p. 118

3. Griawold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 10

Let us therefore dismiss unceremoniously the myth that the Gatha was composed about 1000 B.C. Tilak, the greatest of the Vedic scholars, has proved by astronomical data, that composition the Rigveda started at about five thousand B.C.¹ The Gatha is contemporaneous with the later portions of the Rigveda and seems to have been composed about 3500 B.C. Bhagawan Zarathushtra, who had flourished in the Vedic period is the first prophet of the Aryan race. The next prophet Bhagawan Ramachandra came down one thousand years later (about 2500 B.C.) The third prophet Sri Krishna came down after another one thousand years i.e. about 1500 B.C. which is said to be the date of the Mahabharata war. Another one thousand years passed and Gautama Buddha made his appearance. With him the historic age starts. To seek to make Dharmaraja (Prophet) Zarathushtra more or less a contemporary of Gautama Buddha is the height of frivolity. At least three milleniums, viz. the age of the Upanishads (3500-2500 B. C.), the age of Ramayana (2500 to 1500 B. C.) and the age of the Mahabharata (1500-500 B. C.) intervened between Zarathushtra and Gautama. The Gatha is one of the earliest Upanishads, embedded as it is in the Samhita portion of the Veda (viz. Bhargava Samhita) while the majority of the Upanishads form part of the Brahmana (Aranyaka) portion, which is later than the Samhitas.

The Gatha seems to have inspired the Swetaswatara Upanishad,—the Yellow Camel (Zarathushtra) leading the White-Mule (Sweta-Aswatara). Apart from the totemic nomenclature of both the prophets, monotheism and Bhakti which are the special message of the Gatha, form important lessons of the Swetaswatara Upanishad. In the whole Upanisadic literature, the word "Bhakti" is for the first time met with in the Swetaswatara, (6-23) and Swetaswatara announces monotheism in much more stronger terms than any other scripture has done—एको हि स्रो न द्वितीयश्च तदुः (8-2) Rudra is

1. Tilak—Orion p. 200

2. Z 3500 B.C. (see p 33-34)

one and does not tolerate a second. The Swetaswatara is a very early Upanishad. The Gita borrows from the Swetaswatara सर्वतः पारिवर्त्तते (Sweta 3-13 and Gita 13-13), and Vadarayana in the Sutras श्रुत्वा च (1-1-12) and नमस्कृत्य अक्षिरोपात् (1-4-8) presuppose the Swetaswatara. The Gatha is therefore much anterior to the Gita.

Unfortunately the name "Zarathushtra" does not occur in the Veda. If it were there, that would have set at rest all controversy about the antiquity of the Holy Prophet. Yet the absence of a direct mention of his name need not be considered fatal. There is enough circumstantial evidence in the Veda, which unmistakably points to the towering personality of the foremost Aryan prophet.

But before we go up to the veda, let us peep into the Mahabharata. Jackson has taken the trouble to collect all the references that there are in the legends and myths of all the countries ranging from Armenia to Scandinavia, but he has very sadly neglected the tradition recorded in the great epic of India, the country that shared with Iran a joint civilisation and social life up to the period of the great Mahabharata war, about 1500 B. C.

In the Narayaniya section of the Santi parva (chapters 334-340 of the Bangabasi edition and Chapters 342-348 of the Kumbhakonam edition) there is a very interesting story. Briefly stated it is this. In the province of Chedi (Khorasan) there was a king named Vasu. He had an air ship and could fly in the sky at his will and therefore he was known as Uparichara Vasu. Narayana gave him a scripture that was prompted by seven Chitra Sikhandins (hallowed beings = angels = Amesa Spentas)²

The scripture was as good as the Veda (335-28,40) being the storehouse of eternal laws (335-53). It was a new divine dispensation (335-25) and adorned with the grace of Om-kara (Hun-Vara)—Chap 335-27.

1. S. C. Sen—Mystic Philosophy of the Upanisads p. 24

2. Chapter 335-27, 335-29, 336-3

Vasu performed a great sacrifice to the highest God Harimedhas. A prominent feature of this sacrifice was that animal flesh was not offered as oblation न तत्र पशुनालो अयुत (336-10).

We might remember in this connection that Maharatu Zarathushtra had condemned the oblation of flesh (as used to be the custom in the time of Yama,—Gatha 32-7). He did away with such sacrifices and purified the rituals¹.

Mahabharata tells us how Vasu was converted to this cult of nonviolent sacrifice. There was a conflict of opinion between the Saints and Deva-worshippers whether meat could be offered as oblation. The Deva-Yanists supported the oblation of flesh and the Saints (Mazda-Yanists) opposed it. The matter was referred to king Vasu. Out of his partiality for Deva-worshippers, Vasu gave his decision in favour of the use of flesh. The Saints cursed him for his partisanship. Thereupon Vasu lost his power of flying in the sky. He soon repented and adopted the custom of five prayers a day (337-10) and regained his power. This apparently is the Indian version of the story of Vistasp's conversion as related in Chapter V of Jackson's Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran.

In this great sacrifice of King Vasu, Brihaspati, the priest of the Deva-worshippers was also present. He flew into a rage, stood up with the laddle in his hands and declared that he was not going to tolerate that an 'unseen God' would take the libation.

अदरेण इतो मामो देवेन हरिमेधसा
बृहस्पतिस्त्वतः क्रुद्धः स्रुचम् उच्यम् वेगितः

Santi Parva 336-13

Some other sages such as Ekata, Dwita, and Trita pacified Brihaspati by saying that such form of (aniconic) worship was very much current in Sweta dwipa, which lies

1. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism p. 73

north of mount Meru (Elburz) and near about the Kshiroda (Caspian) sea.

Narada became very inquisitive about this novel cult. He went up to Narayana himself. This Narayana was a great sage (द्विषाम् बरिष्म् greatest of the bipods—335-1) and not God Narayana. Narada learnt all the secrets of this new religion from Narayana.

नरदेन तु संग्रासः सरहृत्स्यः संस्यदः
एषो धर्मः जगन्नाथात् साक्षान् नारायणान् वृषः

Santi Parva 346-10, 348-54.

This great apostle is designated as Narayana, because he was a divine person. This brings to our mind the ideal of the नरोद्देश् नरः (the Man-in-men) of the Gatha (48-12), which connotes the same idea as Narayana.

This is the same ancient religion that God Hari Medhas Himself had previously taught to Brahma,

ततः ब्रह्मा नमश् चक्रे देवाय हरिमेधसे
धर्मं चाप्रार्थ्य स जग्राह सरहृत्स्यं संस्यदम्

Santi Parva 348-30

We are reminded how Spithma Zarathushtra taught the same religion that Ahura Mazda had taught in the House of Song (Gatha 48-10).

Narada wanted to ascertain how this religion was being actually practised. He looked up further north-west (आलोक्ष्य उत्तरपश्चिमेन 335-7) and came to live amongst these excellent devotees (336-29).

He found the religion to be a satvata (सात्वत) religion (335-19, 24) i. e. a religion in which a personal God is worshipped as the supporter of Satwa Guna (Spenta Manyu). It was a strictly monotheistic religion (एकान्तिन्) 334-44, 336-30, 54. That it was aniconic goes without saying; for it was Brihaspati's protest against aniconism that drew Narada's attention to it. The devotees were very

spiritual (335-13) and they used to offer prayers five times a day (335-25, 337-30). They were also accustomed to silent prayers of Japa (मन्त्रो नाम स जपः—338-36) which reminds one of Vaj prayer. They were all equal (336-30) which means that there was no caste-distinction. The people had very white complexion and wore caps (छत्राह्वितरीर्षा—335-11) Narada was glad to find these monotheistic people, accustomed to five prayers a day and devoted to Hari Medhas in thought, word, and deed (Humata, Hukhta, Huvrshhta) (338-46)

Narada became enamoured of these people, came back and recited their scripture before a large audience in the court of Brahma,

इदं महोपनिषदं चतुर्वेदसमन्वितम्
सर्व्व्यं योगकूलं तेन पंचरात्रानुश्रितम्
नारायणमुखोद्गीतम् नारदो ब्रुवावयत् पुनः
ब्रह्मो ब्रुवते तत यथाष्टं यथाधुतम् ॥

Santi Parva 339-111/112

It is a great Upanishad, containing the summary of all the four Vedas, and the gist of Sankhya and Yoga, and known by the name of Pancha-Ratra.

Is not the above description a very faithful account of the ways of Mazda Yasna, as faithful as could be expected from a poet writing at a distant age and a distant country?

I have put in detailed quotations, for if the points of resemblance are taken into consideration, the Narayaniya chapter alone would suffice to establish the antiquity of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra and one need not have any hesitation in dismissing the unreliable traditions recorded by Arab historians.

Earlier scholars had said that the way of Bhakti was not so prominent in the age of the Upanishads, and the Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata represent the attempt of Narada to import Bhakti from some western region outside of India. They thought that it was an attempt to import Christianity

from Palestine¹. They made a great mistake in thinking of Christianity instead of Mazda-Yasna. No reason has been given as to why Narada ignored the claim of contiguous Iran and its homogeneous people and crossed over to distant Palestine. Then again there remains the important fact that the Mahabharata was written in an age (1000 B. C.) when Judaism even had hardly come into existence, not to speak of Christianity. Above all, the use of the word Hari Medhas as the name of the highest Deity of this religion is conclusive: Hari Medhas is nothing but the Sanskritisation of the name Ahura Mazda. By the time of the Mahabharata the epithet Ahura (Asura) had, in India, come to be looked down upon as dishonourable, and the sage Vyasa did not like to use that word as the adjective of the highest Lord. He replaced it by "Hari" which very much resembled "Ahura" in sound and at the same time was most honourable. That 'Mazda' and 'Medhas' are interchangeable (ए of मेधा changes to इ, and then to ए, and then to ह) is apparent from the comparison of Sanskrit मेदिन (near-most) and Zend मजदिन. When Hari Mazda is the name of the highest God, the religion cannot be anything else than Mazda-Yasna.

That Hari Medhas is a coined name, coined in imitation of Ahura Mazda, is apparent from the fact that in Sanskrit 'Hari' alone suffices to denote the highest Deity and apparently there is no reason for suffixing 'Medhas' to it. Such addition does not increase the denotation or connotation of Hari. Hari Medhas is not an alternative name for any of the other Gods famous in Veda or Purana. He is therefore a new God imported from outside. This is why the name is not so familiar in Sanskrit. It is found five times in the Narayaniya chapters (Mahabharata) and once only in Vishnu Purana and nowhere else. Thus this one word Hari Medhas alone suffices to prove the antiquity of Atharvan

¹ Seal—Vainavism and Christianity p. 30

vide criticism by Dr. Radhakrishnan, in Indian Philosophy

Zarathushtra. The Mahabharata says that the worship of Hari Medhas was prevalent in the Satya Yuga (348-34) which is long anterior to the age of Sri Krishna or Ramachandra. It may not be said that the Narayaniya chapters are a subsequent interpolation and not a part of the original Mahabharata. These chapters are mentioned in the list of contents, as noted in Parva Samgrahadhyaya (Chapter 2, Adiparva) of the Mahabharata.

Thus the Mahabharata alone suffices to silence the Arabic traditionists. But let us go to earlier literature, to Rigveda itself, and see if there is any reference to the Holy Prophet, in that great book.

As already noted, the name of Maha-Ratu Zarathushtra does not occur in the Rigveda. But there is reason to think that he has been mentioned there by other designations. For instance take the lines

यज्ञै र्जवर्वा प्रथमः पथम् तते
ततः सूर्यः द्रवपा वेन आजनि

Rigveda—1-83-5

Atharvan first chalked out the way of worship and then came the vow keeper Prophet (Vena) of the solar race.

It is probable that the two prophets, Zarathushtra and Ramachandra have been mentioned here.

Zarathushtra has been described in the Avesta as "the Athravan" par excellence

वदता नो ज्ञातो जाध्रव यो स्थितानो ऋतुधरो

Farvardin Yast 94

'Fortunate are we that Spitama Zarathushtra, the Athravan has been born'.

While the Rigveda describes the Bhrigus as Atharvan

अथर्वाणो भृगवः सोम्वारः

Rig 10-14-6

† Soma-drinking Bhrigus are Atharvans, and the Culika Upanisad (10) says that Atharvan denotes the elders of the Bhrigus अथर्वाणो सुगूढमाः ।

Thus the term "Atharva" very probably refers to Zarathushtra.

Similarly Ramachandra was very famous as "the keeper of the vow" (his promise of abdicating the throne in favour of Bharata) and he came of the solar clan. Thus very probably "Vena" refers to Ramachandra.

It may not be said that the mention of Zarathushtra and Ramachandra in the Rigveda is anachronistic. For the compilation of the Rigveda continued through several centuries. The Rigveda itself speaks of the earlier, the middle and the later hymns यो सोमेभिर् वाङ्मे पूर्वेभिर् यो मध्यमेभिर् उत नूतनेभिः (8-92-13). The earliest portions of the Rigveda were composed in the Satya Yuga (before 3500 B.C.) and the latest portions by the end of Treta (2500 B.C). This is supported by the tradition that the Veda had been divided in three books (Rik, Yajus and Saman) by the end of Treta Yuga¹.

Mention by the terms 'Atharvan' and 'Vena' may however be considered rather too wide. Let us therefore turn to another passage where the allusion is more definite.

अपाप शकम् ततनुष्टिम् ऊहति

तनुष्टुभ्रम् मथवा यः क्वात्सखः Rigveda 5-34-3

Sakra (Indra) overthrew that fair-complexioned rebel ततनुष्टि who was the head of the Magha and a friend of Kava.

Tatanushti has been explained by Sayana as the destroyer (सृष्टि) of the existing order (तत्).

Zarathushtra has been called here a rebel, for he rose in rebellion against the Deva Yasna cult (of which Indra is the presiding Deity). Zarathushtra is qualified by the three adjectives तनुष्टुभ्र, मथवा and क्वात्सख. All the three attributes

1. (i) Vishnu Purana 3-2

(ii) Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Traditions P. 315

are characteristic of the Holy Prophet. He was very fair-complexioned (तदुज्ज्वल). This is why he is called Spitama (whitemost) in the Avesta. The church that he founded was named by him as Magha (मगोद् मगाद् Sukta 29-11). Thus he is described as the head of the Magha (मग्ना) and he was the friend of Kava Vistaspa (कवा वीस्तास्यो Sukta 51-16) and he is thus stated to be कवासम्भ.

If these lines of the Rigveda have any historical significance, they certainly refer to Maha Ratu Zarathushtra and to nobody else. For we know of no other person to whom all the three adjectives apply. Take another passage

प्र तद् दुःशीमे पृथ्वाने वेने ।

प्र रमे वोचम् अगुरे मववत्सु ॥ Rigveda 10-93-14

I would now speak of the valiant Prithavana Vena and of Rama along with his Asura and the Maghavats.

Here the name "Rama" undoubtedly refers to Parsu Rama (the Rama of Persia = Zarathushtra) for the Indian Rama, or Ramachandra, had very little concern with Ahura or the Maghavats (members of the Magha Church).

The original designation of Parsu Rama had been simply Rama, and it is by this name, that he is very often described in the Mahabharata and the Puranas. But when another prophet came up bearing the same name, probably so named in remembrance of the glory of his illustrious predecessor, it became necessary to distinguish the one from the other, and the former was called Parsu Rama, and the latter Raghu Rama. That Rama was an honourable term even in Iran is evident from Rama being the name of a Yazata (vide Rama Yasht.)

Parsu is the vedic name for Persia. Zarathushtra was designated Parsu Rama because he belonged to the land of Persia. Subsequently Parsu (which also means a hatchet)

was utilised to express the austere severity of the prophet against polytheism and idolatry. There is also the tradition that Maha Ratu Zarathushtra used to carry in his hands the Asa staff of nine knots,¹ as symbolic of his strict adherence to the rules of Asa (rectitude). In India the Asa staff was converted into a hatchet. The Skanda Purana relates the story reversely and says that the hatchet was converted into a staff. As the hatchet brings up association of violent wrath it was changed into staff. This was done at Hatakeswar (Herat ?)

तेषां तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा रामः सस्त्रमूर्ता वरः ।

चक्रं लोहमर्षीम् यष्टिम् तं मंकवा स झटारकम् ॥

Skanda Purana—Nagara Khanda (6)-94-18

In this passage of Rigveda, the reference to Zarathushtra is made not by his Iranian name but by his Indian designation. Yet the association of Ahura and Maghavats points to the identity.

To some people the identification may appear to be a mere conjecture. Let us therefore look up if there is any firmer ground to take our stand on. The history of the two words "Deva" and "Asura" seems to provide such a ground. Herein there is unmistakable reference to the Reformation of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra, even without a direct mention of his name.

When the Aryas (Indo-Iranians) were living together, both the words Deva and Asura were terms of respect. Thus we find that in the older portion of the Rigveda, all the prominent gods, such as Varuna, Rudra, Agni and even Indra, have been described as Asura,² which leaves no doubt that Asura had once been a term of respect even to Vedic people. That Deva had been an honourable term for the Avestic people is evident from दद्विताना (divine—Sukta 48-1), देवाँज्जह्वा (having divine lustre—Sukta 47-6) and देवाञ्ज्यति (exalts—Sukta 44-6).

1. Vendidad—9-14

2. Hög—Essays on the Parsis P. 279

Subsequently both the words became degraded in meaning. To the Vedic people Asura now means a demon, and to the Avestic people Deva (Div) means a demon. In former days the term for denoting a demon was 'Danava' in both the communities¹.

Both the meanings of Deva (honourable and dishonourable) persist to this day even in the European languages. Thus (i) divine and (ii) deity on the one hand, and (i) devil (ii) deuce and (iii) diabolical on the other, are reminiscent of the original noble connotation and its subsequent fall.

But what could be the reason for this subsequent degradation? If it were the result of a natural degradation, the degraded meanings also were likely to have been more or less similar in both the communities. But the fact that these two once honourable words acquired an exactly opposite sense in each community suggests a wilful degradation. In other words, the attribution of an opposite sense by each community, seems to be the result of a rivalry that grew up between them.

The difference seems to have started over the use of the icon in worship. For whatever may have been the original derivative meaning of 'Deva' and 'Asura' in popular usage, Deva came to mean a visible God (God represented by an idol) and Asura, an invisible (formless) God. Some people preferred the use of an icon; this was Deva-Yasna. Others interdicted its use. Their cult was known as Ahura-klesa in the beginning and Mazda-Yasna later on. Polytheism and caste-distinction were the other two concomitant features of Deva-Yasna, while monotheism and caste-equality were the other features of Mazda-Yasna. But the use or the disuse of the icon is the custom that is responsible for their different nomenclature.

1. Haug—Essays on the Parsis P. 279

Brihaspati was the leader of Deva-worshippers. We have seen how enraged he was when king Vasu offered oblation to aniconic Hari Medhas. Bhrigu or Sukra was the leader of the Asura-worshippers. He was so much intolerant of idolatry that he is said to have dealt a blow on the breast of Vishnu

तम् दृष्ट्वा मुनिशार्दूलः सुगुः क्रोपसमन्वितः
सख्यं पार्श्वं चिन्तित्सेप बिष्णोर् वक्षसि शोभने

Padma Purana—Uttara Khanda 255-48

On seeing Vishnu the great Muni Bhrigu became highly enraged and kicked on the breast of Vishnu with his left foot.

It is evident that Vishnu must have had a body, in order to have a breast, and that the attribution of a body was the cause of the annoyance of Bhrigu.

The attitude of Brihaspati and Bhrigu points out the difference in the outlook of the two communities, and also throws light on the accepted significance of Deva and Asura, irrespective of the original meaning of the two words. It was not a question of the individual tastes of Brihaspati and Bhrigu. They acted as the representatives of two different ideologies—the Deva and the Asura cults.

The following verse of the Yajur Veda leaves no doubt that the term Asura subsequently came to mean aniconic or formless. The Rishi here denounces the aniconic form of worship and solicits Agni to drive out the aniconic Gods.

ये रुपाणि प्रतिभुञ्जमानाः असुराः संतः स्वधया चरन्ति
परा पुरो निपुरो ये भरन्ति अभिस् तान् लोकात् प्रशुदाति अस्मात्—

Yajus 2-30

Those who casting off their forms, have become Asuras, and now move about as spirits to the front, to the back and on all sides, may Agni drive them away from this place.

We know from Avestic traditions that it was Maha Ratu Zarathushtra who uttered the first word of protest against the Deva Yasna cult¹, and that the Gods used to

1. Pravardin Yast—93

move about in human form before the advent of Zarathushtra. This is supported by the Indian tradition that the adventures of Parsu Rama is the basis of the Deva-Sura war.¹ It can therefore be safely inferred that the reformation of Spitama Zarathushtra is responsible for causing the degradation in the meaning of the word Asura in the Rigveda. Thus the Rigveda bears testimony to the great change effected by the movement of Zarathushtra. It is idle to deny that he is a contemporary of the Rigveda simply because he is not mentioned there by his Iranian name.

The Deva-Sura war, the clash between the ideals of iconic and aniconic worship, is of vital importance to the Indo-Iranian race. Its importance in the religious world is unique. For it not only affected Hindu-ism and Parsi-ism, the two oldest religions of the world, it fashioned to a large extent the three Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam too, so far as their ideal of monotheism and iconoclasm is concerned. The Old Testament is the basic scripture of all these three religions, and its compilation was completed by prophets like Ezra and Nehemiah only in 450 B. C.² The Jews came in close contact with Mazda Yasna, during their exile in Babylon, and learnt the lessons of monotheism and iconoclasm therefrom and introduced them in the Bible.³ We should not therefore rest content with merely the degradation of the meanings of Deva and Asura but try to find out if any other relevant facts about this movement can be gathered from the Rigveda. Fortunately the whole history of the Indo-Iranian dispute can be traced from the Rigveda. In the matter of reconstructing this story, it is however very necessary to remember these two points :

(1) Firstly, that when Atharvan Zarathushtra made his appearance, Deva Yasna had already been in existence.

1. Fargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition—P. 68
2. Gangaprasad—Fountainhead of Religions P. 43
3. Macdonell—Comparative Religion p. 128

He saw that the icon was being used by some people in the worship of God (Sukta 48—10). He saw that the caste system was current (Sukta 33-3). He calls these people by the name Devachina (Sukta 30-6). He was acquainted with the story of the slaughter of Vritra (Sukta 44—16). All these facts point to the prevalence of the Deva Yasna cult.

This would silence scholars like Khabardar who claim a pre-vedic age for Maha Ratu Zarathustra.

(2) Secondly, that Ahura-tesa (also called Paourya-tesa) had been the original creed of the Indo-Iranians,¹ and that Deva-Yasna was an innovation, against which Zarathushtra raised his voice of protest.

This would appear from the fact that in the Mahabharata the Asuras are said to be the Elder Brothers, and the Devas, the Younger Brothers अमुराः भ्रातरो ज्येष्ठाः देवाश्चापि यवीयसः (Santi Parva 33-25). The Amara Kosha also says that the Asuras were the previous Gods. शुक्रशिखा दितिसुताः पूर्वदेवाः सुरदिवः। The Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad also says कनीयसा एव देवा ज्यायसा अमुराः (3—1). These only repeat the statement of a rishi of the Rigveda that the Asuras have now lost their power and it is now the regime of Devas निर्मावा उ त्वे अमुरा अमुवन् (10-124-5) and that Indra (the God of the Devas) has now ousted the older God Varuna (10-125-4).

This would silence scholars like Spiegel who would attribute all that is good in the Avesta to Semitic sources*. For not only is Zarathushtra earlier than the Semitic prophets, but there was still an earlier pure religion. The movement of Zarathushtra was an attempt to Reformation² and this Reformation divided the Aryans into two camps. These cults were called Mazda-Yasna and Deva-Yasna in the Upastha, and Pitri Yana and Deva Yana in the Veda. To Mazda-Yasna,

1. (i) Haug—Essays on the Religion of the Parsis p. 259
(ii) Taraporevala—Religion of Zarathustra p. 3
2. Brown—Literary History of Persia Vol I, p. 36
3. Cambridge History of India—Vol I p. 76

the name of Pitri Yana was given in the Veda, for largely speaking, Mazda Yasna reverted to the ancient faith, while Deva-Yana had been an innovation. The Asuras became the opponents of the Devas. The Rigveda says that the Asuras are they who are not Devas अनायुधासः असुराः अदेवाः (8-96-9) and the Vendidad (18-62) gives to Mazda-Yasna the name of अवेचयज्ञः¹ ।

There is a marked contrast between Varuna and Indra, the two main Gods of the Vedic period. Varuna is famous for upholding the moral order, and Indra is famous for his physical powers. Varuna is the least anthropomorphic of the Vedic Gods and Indra is the most anthropomorphic.² The Rigveda also noted the contrast.

इत्राणि अन्यः समिधेषु जिघ्रन्ते
व्रताणि अन्यः अभिरक्षते सदा—Rigveda 7-83-9

Indra protects from the external foe and Varuna upholds the moral order.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra had realised the supreme need of moral character. Asa (Rectitude) forms the very basis of the religion that he established and he naturally affiliated himself to Varuna.

Varuna is the more ancient God. He is not only Indo-Iranian, he is an Indo-European God. The Greeks worshipped him under the name of Ouranos³ and considered him to be ancestor of Zeus.⁴

In the Veda too Asura Varuna has often been called "the Father"

अपोनिषिञ्च असुरः पिता नः
धसन्तु गर्गरा अपां वरुण
अवनीचीर् अप सृज वदन्तु
पृथि-वाहवो मण्डुका इरिणानु

Angirasa Veda 4-15-19

1. Hodivala—Zarathustra and his Contemporaries in the Rigveda—p. 2
2. Maedonell—Vedic Mythology—p. 24
3. Maedonell—Vedic Mythology—p. 34
4. Maedonell—Vedic Mythology—p. 36

May Asura Varuna, our Father, pour down water.
Let shaven sages (मण्डुका) of the land of Iran, with the Prisi in their hands, hail the downpour.

Thus Mazda-Yasna, which very much resembled the old Varuna cult, was called पितृयान (the way of the fore-fathers) in India.

This is about the designation of the two cults. Let us see what the Veda says about their characteristic features.

A Deva-Yanist cries out

परं मुखोः अनुपरेहि पंचाम यस् ते स्व इतरो देवयानात् ।
चक्षुष्यते शृण्वते ने ब्रवीमि मा नः प्रजां रीरिषो मोत वीरान् ॥

Rigveda 10-18-1

Let the other cult (Pitri-Yana)-the cult other than Deva Yana-go to ruins. We would worship the God "who has eyes and ears"

While the Pitri Yana is described as follows :

यं त्वा यावापृथिवी यं त्वा आपः त्वष्टा यं त्वा सृजनिमा जजान ।
पन्वाम् अनु प्रविद्वान् पितृयानम् य मद् अग्ने समिधानो विभाहि ॥

Rigveda 10-2-7

May Agni (born of heaven, earth and water, and kindled by Twasta) shine brightly in the Pitri Yana cult.

It is thus clear that the Pitri Yanists offered worship before the altar of fire. They did not feel the need for a god with eyes and ears.

The use of the icon seems to be the main factor that accentuated the difference between the two communities. In any case this practice is responsible for their different designation.

Though a particular rishi decried the Pitri Yana cult and wanted it to go to ruins, that does not seem to have been the general attitude. Only the Indra worshippers felt some sort

of animosity towards the Pitri-Yana. The majority of the people appreciated the underlying truth of both the cults. They thought that each was complementary to the other and that in between them, the Iranian and the Indian religions comprehended all possible modes, and provided for all possible varieties of worship.

द्वे श्रुती अष्टणवम् पितृणाम् अहं देवानां उत मर्त्यानाम् ।

ताभ्याम् इदं विश्वं एजत समेति यद् अन्तरा पितरं मातरं च ॥

Rigveda 10-88-5

I have heard of both the ways—the way of the Pitri people and the way of the Deva people. All the world proceeds by the one or the other of these two—and men born of a father and a mother.

All the same, there was a clash of ideals. The other cult has its part to play, but both of them cannot be practised at one and the same time. There can be no compromise between aniconism, between caste-equality and caste-division. This is the truth that Maha Ratu Zarathushtra emphasised, and which his followers forget, when they try to reinstate polytheism under the veil of doing honour to the Yazatas.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra turned back to Varuna. This was a monotheistic cult—for Asura Varuna the sovereign of the universe, and there is none to question his sovereignty.

अस्तभ्नाद् याम् असुरो विश्ववेदाः अमिमीत वरिमाणं पृथिव्या ।

आसीदद् चिदवा भुवनानि सप्ताद् विश्वेत् तानि वरुणस्य ब्रह्मनि ॥

Rigveda 8 42-1

All wise Asura Varuna created the heaven and the earth and is the sovereign of the Universe. This is His glory.

Deluded are the scholars who tell us that the Aryas worshipped the created (nature's objects) and not the creator.

It is generally assumed that all religions are polytheistic to start with, and become monotheistic with the progress of thought. But the reverse is the truth. All religions are monotheistic in the beginning.¹ New Gods are added mostly on political grounds, such as the combination of two races into one.² Jehovah was the God of the Israelites. When they conquered Canaan, the Canaanite God Baal also came to be worshipped along with Jehovah.³ Allah is the God of the Muslims. When the Jews of Medina were subjugated, Hazrat Muhammad permitted the use of Rahman (the name used by Jews) along with Allah (Koran 17-110).⁴ Fortunately this did not develop into polytheism, but the possibility was there.

Apart from the combination of the Gods of two people another potent cause of the growth of polytheism is the application of more than one name to the same God. Originally this is done to lay emphasis on the different aspects of the same God—as "Rahman" lays emphasis on the kindness of Allah. In the Vedic religion the same God was called Varuna when emphasis was laid on his moral character, and he was called Indra, when emphasis was meant on his physical prowess. As a matter of fact the polytheism of the Veda grew mainly out of this cause. When any particular aspect was desired to be emphasised the same Being was given a different name such as Agni, Yama, or Matariswan. This is the unambiguous assertion of the Rigveda.

एकं सत् विद्याः बहुधा वदन्ति ।

अग्निम् यमं मातरिरिवानम् आहुः । Rigveda 1-164-46

This is how Max Muller says that the so called polytheism of the Veda is not real polytheism; it is really henotheism,⁵ i.e. polytheism in appearance but monotheism in reality.⁶ But the

1. Windle—Religions of Past and Present p. 205
2. Windgery—Comparative Study of Religion p. 84
3. Macdonell—Comparative Religion p. 121
4. Sell—The Historical Development of Koran p. 53
5. Macdonell—Sanskrit Literature p. 71
6. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 10

wall is a very thin one, and henotheism soon passes into polytheism. The process starts with joint-responsibility (as in the case of two Aswins, who are one-in-two, there being no separate function for each) and develops into equal responsibility (as in the case of Indra and Varuna, who are considered to be two-in-one, two friends complementary to each other) The next step is the implication of one friend by the other. When Varuna is worshipped, his Friend (मित्र) Indra also is supposed to be worshipped by implication, and when Indra is worshipped, his friend Varuna is supposed to have been worshipped by implication.

The tendency is so contagious, that at a subsequent period it spread over even to Iran, the land of strict monotheism, and Mithra began to be worshipped along with Mazda.¹ Mithraism was carried over to Rome, by the Roman soldiers, who came to fight against the Sassanian monarchs. The Romans had become worshippers of Mithra, before they took to Christianity and Christmas day (wrongly supposed to be the birthday of Jesus Christ) is reminiscent of Mithra worship.²

It would thus appear that the process generally starts with laying emphasis on the two aspects of the same God, but when the two are joined together, and worshipped as a pair of Gods, their unity has been entirely lost. Monotheism has come to an end, and polytheism has started its course.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra appeared on the scene just at the time when Varuna and Indra began to be worshipped as a pair of Gods which is far from being the case of different emphasis laid on the different aspects of the same God. The god is no longer one, but they are two. Zarathushtra thought that the limit has been reached and the game must be stopped. For once the play of adding Gods to Gods makes its start, there is no knowing where it will end. It has reached in India the

1. Maodonell—Vedic Mythology p. 127

2. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism p. 307

number of 330 millions, i.e. one God for each inhabitant of India. Religion is said to be the bond of unity between the individuals and the nation. If religion provides one separate God for each individual, that would be ideal unity indeed!

So Maha Ratu Zarathushtra started the proposition that as God is one, He should be called by one and one name only, viz Mazda ये आग्नेयी मज़दाबो सावी अहुरो Sukta 45-10 Who is known by the name "Ahura Mazda"

मज़दाबो सखारे मइरित्तो Sukta 29-4

Mazda alone is adorable-most

[सखारः—सस्वरः—one who goes by himself, singular, unique. It comes from the root स्खृ-स्वरति—to go; Nighantu 2-14-54.

The cognate word in Veda is स-स्वर्ता. Cf यत् सस्वर्ता जिहीषिरे यद् आभिः (Rigveda 7-54-5)—what the Unique One conceals, or what is manifest.

स्खृ+तृच्—स्वर्ता; स्खृ+अङ्—स्वरः; सखार becomes सखारे by substituting ए in place of सु by the rule सुपां-सुङ् 7-1-39]

Zarathushtra took up the task of "deepening the meaning of religion" for the people of Iran, and founding a reasonable ethical system. While Varuna was losing ground in India, Zarathushtra was developing the figure of Ahura Mazda, and depriving him of a rival, by degrading Indra, his most serious competitor as the God of war, to the rank of a demon.¹ It required a good deal of courage to abjure a pre-eminent god like Indra, who had thrown in the background all other ancient Gods, as the Rigveda states.

देवास्तु चित्ते अयुषां च पूर्वैः अनुक्षत्राय ममिरे सहासि ।

इन्द्रो मयानि दयते विषय इन्द्रं वाजस्य बोहुवन्त सातौ ।

Rigveda 7-21-7

All the ancient Gods, O Indra, submitted their powers to your lordly dominion (अयुषां चित्राय). It is out of his kindness

1. Keith—Religion and Philosophy of Veda and Upanishads p. 408

(i.e. for their own benefit) that Indra subdues the Maghas. People call out to Indra for the acquisition of strength.

Indra was so important that out of the one thousand hymns of the Rigveda, 250 hymns are addressed to Indra, while for Varuna there are only 12 hymns, for Vishnu 5 and for Rudra 3. The opposition that the repudiation of Indra was likely to stir up was appalling, but Zarathushtrian courage was equal to the occasion. Other features associated with the Indra cult, such as iconism and caste-distinction, also seemed to Zarathushtra to be very baneful for the community, and Maha Ratu Zarathushtra decided that for the good of the nation, Indra must go. That was a momentous decision—a decision that has affected the history of mankind for ever. Mankind heard for the first time a definite, decided, resolute proclamation of monotheism from the foremost prophet of the Indo-Iranians. It has been and is still being echoed in different climes. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra asserted monotheism, not by words alone. He established the Magha Church for the confirmation and propagation of monotheism. It was a bold challenge thrown to the existing society.

Indra-worshippers also were not going to take the matter lying down. They organised themselves into a distinct group determined to obstruct the spread of Mazda-Yasna at all cost. The Indo-Iranians become divided into two groups on the method of worship—the aniconic protestants and the iconic catholics, so to say.

It is however to be noted that Zarathushtra did not wish to set up an altogether strange order of things. His protest was directed against the innovations of the Indra cultists and he wanted to go back to the pure ancestral religion.

Yet it is not exactly the same old religion that he established. Zarathushtra had become very suspicious about the advisability of retaining the name "Varuna". There was some weakness inherent in the Varuna cult that afforded the opportunity for the growth of the Indra cult, as its

offshoot. Zarathushtra would not tolerate such a loop-hole to remain any longer. Varuna had been described as the friend of Indra.

अगु द्युषु वरुण इन्द्र-सखा

Rigveda 7-34-24

Varuna is the friend of Indra in the heavens.

The association of the two names Indra and Varuna, as two equal co-partners, was much too vivid in the minds of men so that one name was likely to call up the memory of the other. Zarathushtra did not like to encourage this imperceptible re-entry of Indra. He decided to adopt another name for the highest God of the new cult. He selected the name 'Vedhas' (Mazda).

Vedhas was not a new coinage. Rudra had been called वेधस ।

अषाढाय महमानाय वेधसे ।

Rigveda 7-46-1

Mitra has been called Vedhas :

राजा सुकृत्रो अनामिष्ट वेधाः ।

Rigveda 8-59-4

Agni has been called Vedhas :

कीलालपे सोमपृशाय वेधसे ।

Rigveda 10-9-41

And Soma has been called Vedhas :

प्र पूतानाय वेधसे सोमाय च च उद्धतम्

Rigveda 9-103-1

As a matter of fact the name Vedhas, when used in association with Asura, referred to the Highest Lord

पतंगम् अकं असुरस्य मायया हृदा पश्यन्ति मनसा विपचितः ।

समुद्रे अन्तः कवयो विचक्षणै मरीचीनाम् पदम् इच्छन्ति वेधसः ॥

Rigveda 10-117-1

Through the grace of the Asura the sages see clearly within themselves the up-going soul (पतंग). Their sight can pierce the depth of the sea. They desire from Vedhas, the status of the saints (मरीची).

Agni is said to be the special messenger of Vedhas.

त्वाम् इद् अत्र कृणते स्वायवी होतारं अग्ने विदधेयु वेधसः ।

Rigveda 10-91-9

In this assembly, O Agni, the people elect you alone to be the priest of Vedhas.

The hymn was sung in इल्लस् पद the land of Iran, (as the first verse of the hymn announces—इमे दमुना इववज् इलस्पदे 10-91-1)

Thus the name Vedhas was quite familiar in Iran.

So 'Vedhas' became the new God. The form वेधा (ending in ञ instead of अस्) was also in use

वज्ञानं सप्तमातरः वेधाम् अशासत श्रिये Rig. 9-102-4

When 'Vedha' came into existence, seven mothers (Amesa Spentas?) blessed Him for glory.

'Vedhas' and 'Medhas' are in unison with each other. The Nirukta says (3-15) that the meaning of वेधस् is मेधावि. Thus वेधा and मेधा (वेधस् and मेधस्) are coupled together. The Gatha also is aware of this affinity when it says मज्जदाब्जोददुस (45-1) - 'Meditate'. So meditation and wisdom go together. मेधस् easily changes to मज्जदस्. ए changes to इ, इ to व and व to ज Thus मेधा becomes मज्जदा just as नेदिष्ट becomes नज्जदित्त.

Thus Vedhas came to be invoked as Mazda in the land of Iran.¹

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra substituted a new name for Varuna. This he did in order to break up the association with Indra. In their characteristic feature however, (such as the sustenance of the moral order and loving kindness to the devotee) Mazda and Varuna are one and the same. "The evidence that identifies Varuna with Mazda, is too strong to be rejected"². "It seems to me almost an unimaginable feat of scepticism to doubt the original identity of Varuna and Mazda"³. The Iranians gave to the new cult the name of Mazda Yasna. The Indians however saw that new religion differed little from their common ancestral religion, except

1. Maxmuller—Science of Mythology, p. 126

2. Maenicol—Indian Theism, p. 11

3. Bloomfield—The Religion of the Veda, p. 121

in the name of Vedhas for Varuna. They therefore chose to call it पितृयान rather than मज्जदा-यस्न ।

The impudence of the followers of Zarathushtra aroused the anger of Indra. He began to swear vengeance on them.

खले न पर्षान् प्रतिहन्मि भूरि

किं मां निन्दन्ति शशवो अनिन्द्राः Rig. 10-48-7

I shall crush them like leaves on the grinding stone—how do these unbelieving (अनिन्द्र) rogues dare to vilify me?

But Maha Ratu Zarathushtra was made of a different stuff. He was not to be daunted by threats. He went on quietly with the task of propagating the faith. And Indra soon found to his grief that the whole of Persia and Media had adopted Mazda Yasna. They had abjured the Indra cult.

(i) सं मां तपन्त्य अमितः सपत्नीर इव पर्शवः । Rig. 1-105-8

The Persians oppress me (Indra worshipper), as a co-wife does a co-wife.

(ii) सुषी न शिञ्जाः वि अदन्ति माष्यः । Rig. 10-33-2

The Medians bite me, as the rat bites the weaver's thread.

Parsu was the Vedic name for Persia, Madhya (subsequently changed to Madra) the name for Media, Prithu the name for Parthia¹, Kuru Sravan and Chedi the name for Khorasan in Puranic days. The other Iranian provinces came to be known as follows.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| (1) गान्धार | = Eastern Afghanistan |
| (2) बाम्बोज | = Western Afghanistan |
| (3) बह्लीक | = Bactrea |
| (4) चेदि | = Khorasan |
| (5) मद्र | = Media |
| (6) केकय | = Armenia |

1. The close association of पृथु and पर्शु (in the line—प्राचा पश्यन्तुः पृथु-पर्शवः सयुः Rig 7-88-1. The Parthians and Persians went east-ward in search) fixes the meaning of both the names,

Mazda Yasna flourished in all these provinces.

Bhrigu was the preceptor of the Asura-worshippers and Angirasa the preceptor of the Deva worshippers. The Bhrigu people adopted Mazda Yasna and Angirasa people stuck to Deva Yasna. Bhrigu means bright and Angirasa means dark (cf. अंगार = coal). Both are Fire-cults, and Bhrigu may be said to represent the flame and Angirasa, the ember. The ember is darker as compared with the flame. The Bhrigus were more fervorous. That may have been the cause of the original designation. But it is also physically true. The Hindus are darker than the Parsis, as the Mahabharata also observes when it describes the worshippers of Hari Medhas as श्वेत (Santi Parva 385-10). The word Hindu gradually came to mean black, as Hafiz tells us in the oft-quoted lines

अगर आन तुको गीराजी बदस्त आरख दिले मार
व खाले हिन्दु अश चखशम समरकन्द ओ बुझारार

If that girl of Shiraz, would bring back my heart to me, I would give Samarkand and Bukhara in exchange for her black mole.

Thus there grew up a dissension between the Bhrigus and the Angirasa. The Bhrigus occupied the western regions, the Angirasa spread eastward. Indra is called अंगिरस्य— the greatest patron of the Angirasa (Rigveda 1-100-4). He predominated in Sapta Sindhu (Rig 5-24-27)— the eastern provinces.

We may trace references to the Angirasa and the Bhrigus even in the Gatha. The Gatha says that the Angirasa devised the practice of icon-worship या अन्वया रूपने उरुपदेदन्ती (49-10). Angira becomes Angira, by dropping the final स in accordance with the Vartika स्तोत्र अन्वयोर् लोपः (final स and न often drop in Vedic words). Angira is the form that we find in the Mundaka Upanishad, (1-1-2)

अवर्वा तां प्रोवाच अंगिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम्

Angira further contracts as Angra in the Zend, and it changes to Angra-ya by addition of रा in प्रथमा plural, by the rule सुपि सु-ङ्क् (Panini 7-1-39). Usij (or Usik) who is a descendant Brihaspati (Rig 1-18-1 10-99-11) is mentioned in the Gatha (44-10). The Bhrigus are referred to in the Gatha, as Spitamas (46-15) i. e. white-moats. For Bhrigu is more widely known as Sukra or the White one.

The difference between the Bhrigus and the Angirasa resulted in the compilation of a supplementary Veda (the Atharva Veda—the Veda of Fire Priest). Atharva also means that which comes afterwards. It is derived from the root ऋ ; ऋच्छति—to go ; अथ+वृ+वनिप्=अथवान् is the Sanskrit equivalent of Zend आथवान i. e. अग्निवान् or Fire Keeper. This Veda is called the Veda of the Fire-Priest, for unlike the three original Vedas, it is more concerned with the preservation of the domestic fire (discharge of domestic duties) than the performance of big sacrifices like Jyotistoma etc.

Panini was familiar with the Avesta (1-3-25)—the Veda compiled at the instance of the Prophet of the Asura cult. There must have been others in India who, like Panini, saw the Avesta. Bhavisya Purana describes Atharva Veda as the Veda of the Maghas.¹

The word "Pustaka" (book) itself is said to have been derived from "Avesta",² so the Avesta must have been very familiar in India. There seems to be little doubt that by Bhargava Samhita, the Gopatha Brahmana intends the Avesta.

It is gratifying for the Parsis to know that the Gopatha Brahmana, the Sankhyana Sutra and Sayana too, consider the Bhargava Samhita to be better than the Angirasa Samhita of the Atharva Veda. The Gopatha Brahmana

1. Hodirala—Parsis of India—p. 80

2. Spiegel—Grammar of the Parsi Language—p. 204

(1-1-15) compares the Bhargava Samhita to sweet water, and the Angirasa Samhita to saline water. The Sankhayana Sutra (XVI-1) calls the Bhargava Veda मेघन (genial) and the Angirasa Veda चोर (rough). While Sayana in the introduction to his commentary on the Atharva Veda considers Bhargava to be शान्त (calm) and Angirasa to be चोर (rough). The Hindus also may congratulate themselves that their forbears had the generosity to admit the excellence of the scripture of a rival sect. Nay, they even admitted the superiority of the Asura worship.

(1) यथा देवाः असुरेषु श्रदां समेषु चक्रिरे । R/g 10-151-3

Just as the Devas entertain respect for the stalwart Asuras

(2) अयं देवानाम् असुरो विराजति । Angirasa Veda 1-10-1

This Ahura lords it over the Devas.

All the same the spirit of rivalry is also quite patent.

Zarathushtra claims for Mazda the glory of defeating Vritra, (Sukta 44-16) which according to the R/gveda is the monopoly of Indra.

The Angirases on the other hand claim that all the deeds that are attributed to Vedhas (Mazda) were really done by Indra.

ब्रह्मर तां कृणवन् मृत्युं अन्त्या यानि कुरन्ति वेधसः सुतेषु

R/gveda 7-26-3

And it is really Indra whom the other sect worships, when they offer prayers to Vedhas—for Indra rules over both the communities.

स पत्यते समसोर वृम्भयोः यद् ई वैधसः समिधे हवन्ते R/g 6-25-6

The rivalry persisted through the period of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads.

In the Aitareya Brahmana (1-23) there is the story of such a conflict. The Asuras fortified their cities very strongly and the Devas did not succeed with them. The Devas there-

upon invented the Upasad ceremony (in which plenty of milk has to be drunk by the sacrificer) and were thus able to overthrow the Asuras.¹

In the Satapatha Brahmana (1-2-5) there is another story. The Deva-worshippers wanted to fit up a piece of land for the performance of a Yajna to Vishnu. The Asura-worshippers would not allow them to do so. The Asuras seem to have been the stronger party and the Devas felt much dejected that they could not do their religious service. The Asuras however relented and said 'we can give you only so much land as Vishnu can occupy, and the Devas were glad of it. We find here that the Devas got the worse of it.

In the Chandogya Upanishad (1-2) we find a story where also the Devas did not fare better. This time the contention was over a more serious matter, viz. the form of the Udghita or Pranava. Pranava is the root mantra, the essence of all the mantras (Gita 7-8). The Indian form of the Pranava is Om, consisting of three letters A, U, and M. It seems that the Ahura-worshippers wanted to change it. They wanted to change it to HON, consisting of three letters H, U, and N. They would substitute अ by ह and म by न, उ remaining unaffected. It is related in the passage that the Asuras succeeded in piercing विविष्टुः the Pranava, which means that they killed the old Pranava. They brought into use a new form of Pranava—'Hon' in place of 'Om' (उ becomes ओ, by sandhi with अ of ह)

ह (H) is the cognate of अ (A); substitution of अ by ह serves to turn a soft consonant into hard e. g.

कृ+अ=क	कृ+ह=ख
ग+अ=ग	गृ+ह=घ
च+अ=च	चृ+ह=छ
पृ+अ=प	पृ+ह=फ

Thus अ and ह form a pair; similarly म and न also form a pair.

1. Haug—Religion of the Parsis P. 271

Thus Hon is the nearest approach to Om. The addition of 'A' before 'Hon', is prothetic, made merely for facility of pronunciation.

Thus Om-kara (the sound Om) is virtually the same as Hon-vara (the sound Hon). They are the nearest agnates.

The Parsi Pranava Hon (or Hun, without the sandhi) has been adopted by the Saivas, on the ground that ह is stronger than अ.

अकारः सर्वशक्तिः प्रकाशः परमः शिवः

हकारः ब्रह्मरूपः स्वान् शक्त्यात्मा संश्रुतिः

Siva Purana-Kailas Samhita 11-89.

In Tantra literature Hun (हूं) is the mantra used for arousing the serpent power (coiled up spiritual energy)

हूंकारोन्मथारणेनैव समुत्थाय परी शिवाम्

Gandharva Tantra 11-35

The Budhists have retained both Om and Hon in their famous formula ॐ मणिपद्मे हूं ॥ I meditate 'Om' in the Manipura lotus (the third plexus of the पद् चक्र equipment)

With the division of the Pranava, the separation of the mantras of the Bhrigus and the Angirasas was completed. They would henceforth use altogether different mantras in their prayers.

सुगुभिर् अंगिरोभिश्च हुतं मंत्रैः पृथग्-विधै Vana Parva 223-14

All the same there was not complete rupture between the two communities. The Bhrigus and the Angirasas would still join in the same Yajna, only each party would utter its special mantras, presumably by turn, as seems to be the import of the above line.

This state of things continued for some time. The Upanishads however did not encourage the performance of Yajnas

पुत्रा धाते अदहा यज्ञस्याः
अष्टादशोक्तम् अथर्व वेधु कर्म

Mundaka 1-2-7

The Yajnas are like broken rafts—they do not take one to the shore.

Yajna fell into disuse. A new form of worship cropped up in its place—the Puja form, as against the Yajna form. This consisted of offering fruits, flowers and leaves (पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं...—as the Gita, 9-25, says) instead of libation of ghee and Soma juice. The Bhargavas of India established a new school of Bhakti, which is known as the Pancha-Ratra sect. It is the earliest Bhakti school in India. The fact that it is said to be unvedic¹ (=unorthodox) and that it used to offer prayers five times a day (which practice is responsible for its name as Pancharatra; pancha=five. रात्र = अरात्र = worship) points to its Iranian origin. Subsequently, however, after the advent of Krishna, the Pancharatra lost its identity and became amalgamated with the Bhakti cult of the Vaisnavas. The Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata calls them "satvatas".

When we say that western Iran adopted Mazda Yasna, we do not mean a water-tight zonal division of the two peoples. There were some Deva-Yanist in the western block and some Mazda Yasnists in the eastern. There was no doubt a conflict of ideal between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas, but the Indo-Iranians were much too refined a people to think of deciding theological issues with the help of the sword. There was no attempt to extirpate the Angirasas from the western block or to extirpate the Bhargavas from the eastern.

Not that political wars did not sometimes crop up. A noteworthy instance we find in the famous Dasa-rajna war—the war of the ten kings as it is called. King Chayamana of Bactria had attacked king Sudasa of Panjab. The allies

1. i) Sankara Bhasya on Brahma Sutra 3-2-5
ii) Ganganath Jha—Tantra Vartik p. 165

gathered round both the kings. A graphic description of this war will be found in Sukta 18 of the 7th mandala of the Rigveda. King Chayamana was defeated and he lay on the battle-field like a dead beast पशुम् कविरु अशयन् चयमानः (7-18-8). But it was merely a political fight between two kings. It had nothing to do with the religious faith of the people. For we find Vasista and Viswamitra giving their aid to Sudasa, and both these sages had predilection for the Iranian cult. Vasista is the chief of the sages who sang the hymns of Asura Varuna¹ (the replica of Ahura Mazda) and Viswamitra announced that the divinity of all the gods rested in Ahura Mazat (Rig. 3-55-1). Some Angirasa families lived happily in western Iran. Not to speak of western Iran, both the Bhrigus and the Angirasas were to be found even in Greece where they were known as Phlegyai and Angigos respectively².

A very conspicuous instance of the Angirasa settlement in western Iran is provided by what is known as the Boghaskui inscription. Boghaskui is a hill-tract near Ankara the capital of Asia Minor. In 1907 Winckler, the great German archaeologist discovered there an inscription in which Subbilibiana, king of the Hittites proclaims his faith in Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the two Nasatyas (मित्रस्य इलानि वरुणस्य इलानि इन्द्र इलानि नासत्या अन्य)³. The Hittites were the forefathers of the Armenians⁴ and Armenia at that time included the whole of Asia Minor. The mention of Indra is indicative of the Angirasa cult, and the inscription testifies that the Angirasa cult flourished in the area at that period. The discovery of Winckler has dealt a hard blow to the speculations of Spiegel, Macnicol and others who are very eager to find traces of Semitic

1. Griswold—The Religion of the Rigveda p. 112

2. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 142-144

3. Umesh Vidyaratna—Manabher Adi Janmabhumi p. 447

4. Wells—A Short History of the World, Chap. XVII

influence in the Veda and the Upastha.¹ They would have been very glad indeed if the influence of Jesus Christ could be traced, but as that is not possible, it is some consolation to find the Prophets of Israel exerting their influence. Boghaskui inscription is a severe disappointment to them. Subbilibiana ruled over Armenia in the 14th century B.C., and Judaic religion was promulgated two centuries later. It synchronises with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt into Palestine under the lead of Moses.² This event took place in the 12th century B. C. The Indo-Iranians had developed their own religion without the aid of the prophets of Israel.

We find that Deva Yasna also was prevalent in Armenia in the 14th century B. C. That speaks much for the mutual toleration of the Bhrigus and the Angirasas. Then again the Bhrigus were not the only people that lived in Iran. There were the Vasistas, the original stem out of which grew up the Bhrigus and the Angirasas. The Vasistas sang the praise of Varuna. Their cult has been called Ahura-tkesa in the Avesta (and sometimes as Pairyo-tkesa, i.e. the religion of the ancients) as distinct from Mazda Yasna. Mazda Yasna was intolerant of Indra, but the Pairyo-tkesa was more tolerant.

There was much good feeling between the Vasistas and the Bhrigus, because they were conscious that they worshipped the same Deity. For Mazda differed from Varuna in name alone. There is considerable affinity in their character. "Ahura Mazda agrees with Varuna in character though not in name".³ "It is certain that Varuna and Ahura Mazda were either identical, as Obdenburg thinks or were parallel forms of the same conception".⁴ "One

1. Browne—Literary History of Persia p. 36, 65

2. Historians History of the World Vol. II p. 58

3. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology p. 25

4. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 111

of the most interesting parallels between Veda and Avesta is that both Gods (Varuna and Mazda) are described as the spring of Rita or righteousness. Varuna is 'Kha Ritasya' (Rig 2-28-5) and Ahura Mazda 'Ashahe Khao' (Yas 10-4). The words are sound for sound the same'.¹

The matter need not be left to conjecture alone. Varuna is the 44th name in the list of 101 names of Ahura Mazda² (that some Parsis felt inclined to resort to, tired by the monotony of one name. They thought that there was no harm in addressing the Infinite by infinite names expressive of His infinite attributes). The matter is set at rest by the definite statement of the Rigveda, that Varuna came to be called as Mazda

विदुष दे विद्या भुवनानि सत्य

ता प्रवदीचि वरुणाय वेधस् —Rig. 4-42-7

The whole world knows him. Only some people call Varuna by the name of Vedhas (वदीचि is used in place of वृ वन्ति by the dictum सुप्-लिङ् उपसर्ग etc. which says that suffixes in Veda often change places).

"The priestly family of the Vasistas was very specially the guardian of the worship of Varuna during pre-Vedic and Vedic days"³ The Rigveda states how Varuna rescued Vasista from drowning

वशिष्ठं हि वरुणे नाचि आषात् —Rig. 7-88-4

Along with the Vasistas, the Bhrigus also were first attached to Varuna. Thus the Taittiriya Upanishad calls Bhrigu as "Varuni" (attached to Varuna) and says that he used to worship Father Varuna

यगुर् व वासुणिर वरुणं पितरं उपससार

Taittiriya Upanisad-Bhrigu Valli

1. Bloomfield—The Religion of the Vedas p. 125

2. Anklesaria—Yazama ha Mand p. 24

3. Griewold—The Religion of the Rigveda p. 112

The Mahabharata also says that the Bhargavas were worshippers of Varuna मार्गवाः वारुणा सर्वे (Anusasani 85-129).

It appears that after Mazda-Yasna started its course Bhrigu transferred his allegiance from Varuna (to Vedhas)

यगुर् इ वै वासुणि वरुणं पितरं विद्या (विद्यया) अतिमेने

—Satapatha Brahmana 11-4-5

"On further consideration (विद्या) Bhrigu, a follower of Varuna, by-passed (अतिमेने) Father Varuna".

Henceforth Bhrigu came to be known as the priest of the Asura cult i.e. the follower of Ahura Mazda.

Subsequently when the attempt was made to introduce Mazda into India, under the ideology of Siva, Bhrigu came to be known as the son Siva (Santi Parva 289-34). All the Puranas describe how Siva is the unfailing patron of the Asuras. But more of this strange story later on. Here we are concerned only with the fact that before Siva appeared on the scene, Bhrigu, the priest of Asura cult, was known to be the son of Varuna. That shows the intimacy that existed between Vasistas (who were pre-eminently the followers of Varuna) and the Bhrigus who also were followers of Varuna before they turned to Mazda. The relation between the Vasistas and the Bhrigus was very friendly. Though the relation between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas (the followers of Mazda and the followers of Indra) was a bit strained, that did not develop into relentless enmity.

We have seen how the Asuras though sworn to aniconism, allowed to the Devas a piece of land for the worship of Vishnu. And though the Asuras changed the pranava from Aum to Hum, the Devas did not repudiate it altogether. They adopted the "Hum" in the Saiva and the Tantra cults.

Not to speak of "HUN" alone, the Angirasas adopted even the term "Ahura" (the Iranian version) in their scripture

अहुर इदं ते परिदाम्यहम्

Mantra Brahmana (of Sama Veda) 1-6-21

O Ahura, here, to thee, I present so-and-so

As a matter of fact, the Tantra cult seems to have been devised in order to absorb all that was best in the Mazda-Yasna and which had been left unassimilated by the Saiva cult. And so, in spite of the subsequent gross abuse which has made the name of Tantra so disreputable, it has to its credit the honour of an attempt to absorb the vitalizing features of Mazda-Yasna. Thus it revived the faith in (i) the house-holder's life (ii) caste-equality in matters of worship (iii) martial spirit and (iv) reclamation of the Vratyas (aborigines) as was the instruction of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. The Tantra also revived the Yajna form of worship which the Parsis have retained uninterrupted up to the present day, but which the Hindus had neglected during the period of the Upanishads on account of their ascetic tendencies. The Puranas also neglected the Yajna and preferred the Puja form of worship. In Tantra the puja has to be supplemented by the Yajna.

Thus it may be said that the relation between the Bhrigus and the Angirasas was more one of rivalry than that of enmity. Though some Angirasas resented the dominance of the Maghas

मा नः स्तेनः ईशत मघर्मासः

(Rigveda 6-28-7)

"May not the sneak Magha-Lover Lord it over you" and tried to raise the morale of the Devas by saying that the Asuras were ill-equipped अनायुधसः असुराः अदेवा (Rigveda 8-96-9) there were many others who openly admitted the superiority of the Asuras यथा देवाः अहुरेषु धर्मा उभेपू चक्रिरे (Rigveda 10-151-3) The Devas entertain respect towards the stalwart Asuras. Then again the Fire cult was common to both the communities, as the Rigveda notes वेत्वा हि वैशो अन्ननः पथश्च देवान्यसा

(Rigveda 6-16-3) O Agni, you know both the ways—the way of Vedhas (Mazda) and the path of Deva-lustre

नू मे व्रथानि अन्न उच्य शशाचि त्वं देव मघवद्ग सुप्रदः

रातो स्वाम उभयाम आ ते दूयं पात स्वस्तिनि यदानः

(Rig 7-1-20)

O Agni, teach us our prayer. Bless the Maghavats (Zoroastrians) too. May both the communities be in your protection. Help us always to welfare.

In these circumstances when two communities that came out of the same stock were living in close proximity and had no intention to resort to force of arms for the decision of theological difference, some attempt at rapprochement was very natural. Such desire found expression in three different ways, viz.

(1) Attempt at friendly intercourse often leading to mutual conversion.

(2) Attempt for the assimilation of the best elements of the other cult.

(3) Attempt for harmony, through a synthesis of both the cults.

We find traces of all such attempts in the Rigveda.

Thus we find sage Agastya (apparently an Ahura worshipper) addressing Indra as follows :

किं नु इन्द्र जिवांससि व्रातरः मवृत्त एव

तेभिः कल्पस्व साधुया मा नः समरणे वधी (Rigveda 1-170-2)

Why O Indra, are you so inimical to the invisible Gods (Maruts). They are your brothers. Behave with them gently. Do not fight and slay us.

Another sage (Dyutana) also made a proposal for peace महद्भिर इन्द्र सख्यं ते अस्तु (Rigveda 8-96-7) O Indra, let there be friendship between you and the Maruts (invisible Gods).

But Indra was not to be taken in so easily. He replied.

किं नु भ्रातर, अगस्त्य सखा सन्न अतिमन्यसे

विद्या हि ते यथा मनो अस्मभ्यम् इत् न दिस्तसि (Rig 1-170-3)

'How is it brother Agastya, though a friend, you still disdain us. I know your mind. It is not inclined to us (you profess equality of both the communities, but you have more love for Ahura worship)'.
Thus the attempt of Agastya failed. But it did not always fail. We find Sayana quoting the case of an illustrious conversion.

इः अंगिरसः शौनहोत्रो सत्या, भार्गवः शौनकः अभवत्.

Sayana Bhasya—beginning of the 2nd Mandala

The story runs as follows. Shunahotra was an Angirasa sage. He was caught hold of by Ahura worshippers and converted to the Bhargava cult.¹ Then he came to be known as Shaunaka. In plain words this means that Shunahotra gave up the Indra cult and took to Mazda Yasna. This was a very remarkable success for the Ahura worshippers. For Shunahotra is identified with Gritsamadu who is reputed to be the compiler of the second book of the Rigveda. That the composer of a whole chapter of the Rigveda was converted to the Ahura cult was not a small victory. That an Angirasa can become a Bhargava, suggests that the names indicated two creeds and not two races.

The Deva Yanists also were not asleep. They won over some sages of Iran and one of them cried out.

बहवी सखाः अकस्म अन्तरस्मिन् इन्द्रं कुणानः पितरं ब्रह्मामि

अग्निः सोमः वरुणं ते च्यवन्ते पर्याषिद् राष्ट्रं तद् अबामि आयन्

(Rigveda 10-12-4)

Many a year I have lived with them. I would now adopt

1. Maxmüller—History of Sanskrit Literature p. 233

Indra and adjure Father (ancestral God). Varuna (along with his fire and soma) has retreated. The old regime has changed. I would accept the new order.

The story of these old conversions is extremely interesting. But the scholars failed to give recognition to the Upastha as the Bhargava Veda, and thereby lost the key to the interpretation of the Indo-Iranian religious commerce.

Let us now turn to the topic of assimilation which is of much greater consequence. The portrait of Ahura Mazda, severe in enforcing justice (Gatha 43-5) and yet as loving as the father or the friend (Gatha 45-11) as presented by Maha Ratu Zarathustra was so alluring that the Indian sages felt tempted to import Him to India.

Brihaspati (the preceptor of the Devas) sent his son Kacha, to Bhrigu (the preceptor of the Asuras). Kacha became the disciple of Bhrigu and learnt from him the secret of the sciences that brought immortality to the Asuras.¹ This forms the subject matter of क्विदार उभिस्ताप the charming lyrical drama of Rabindranath Tagore.

A conspicuous attempt for assimilation was made by the famous sage Viswamitra. It is said that he had been a Kshatriya and then became a Brahmin. This probably means that he originally belonged to the Iranian creed which upholds the militant Kshatriya type of character, and then changed over to the Indian creed which upholds the Brahmana type. He could not however forget his love for Mazda, and in his famous hymn (Rig 3-53) he sings the glory of Mazda under the name of Mahat (= Mazat). The name 'Mazda' had by this time been stereotyped, and so the Rishi does not turn

1. Mahabharata—Adiparva—Chap. 70

to the original form 'Vedhas'. He makes the nearest approach to Mazda and calls the God by the name of महत् which would sound like मजत् (for ह् and ज् are interchangeable, as in हस्त and जस्त (hand) and अहम् and अजेम्- I').

There are 21 stanzas in this hymn and the burden (last line) of all the stanzas is the declaration, that the divinity of all the Gods are concentrated in Mazda,

महत् देवानाम् असुरत्वम् एकम्

That Mazda cult is the source of the inspiration of the famous hymn is apparent (apart from the similarity in the sounds of Mazat and Mazda) from the fact that to express the idea of divinity the word used is असुरत्व (Ahura-hood and not देवत्व (Deva-hood). That leaves no doubt about the impact of the Ahura cult.

Some people have taken the word महत् here, as an adjective, qualifying the noun असुरत्व meaning great divinity. This is a mistake. That the word महत् here is a noun, is evident from the second line of the first stanza, the first time that Mahat is used in the hymn.

It says

उत्तः पूर्वां सर्षं सव विवृणु

महत् विजज्ञे अक्षरं पदे गोः

Rigveda 3-55-1

He who existed even before the dawn (of creation) that imperishable Mahat manifested Himself (विजज्ञे) along the wake of the universe (पदे गोः). Here 'Mahat' is the noun and अक्षर (eternal) is its adjective. The same महत् is repeated in the fourth line.

In this hymn stress is laid on the similarity of the sounds between Mazat and Mazda. In the subsequent attempts, more stress is laid on the traits of Mazda Yasna.

The outstanding feature of Mazda-Yasna (as Maha Ratu Zarathushtra had taught it) is its simplicity and rejection of unnecessary ceremonials. Ceremonials had come to claim so much of the attention of the devotees in Deva Yasna, that it left him little time to think of God. "Whether an action is to be performed to the left or to the right, whether a pot is to be put in this or that spot on the place of sacrifice, whether a blade of grass is to be laid down with the point to the north or to the north-east, whether the priest steps in front of the fire or behind it, in which direction he must have his face turned, into how many parts the sacrificial cake is to be divided, whether the ghee is to be poured into the northern or the southern half or into the centre of the fire, at which instant the repetition of a certain spell or a certain song has to take place—these are the questions on which generations of priests meditated" †. This reminds one of the Bengali adage सोना धुये केवल अँचले गिरा सार—to tie a knot in the scarf leaving out the piece of gold (for which the knot is meant). Atharvan Zarathushtra asked the people to pay more attention to the end than to the means; to be thinking of Mazda and not of the ceremonials. This is the meaning of his condemnation of ceremonials (देवयज्ञ Yasna 30-6) and his acclamation of love (उवाँहिमा Yasna 32-1).

Another feature of Mazda-Yasna is Zarathushtra's regard for equality. No one was to be excluded from the worship of Mazda. It matters little whether a man is an Aryanna, a Verejena, or a Khaetu (Yasna 33-3); even non-Aryans were not to be excluded from taking part in the worship of Mazda (Yasna 46-12).

Some Indian sages realised the worth of these noble ideals and conceived the idea of incorporating them in their own system. They resorted to the old god Rudra who was eminently suited for their purpose.

†. Winternitz—A History of Indian Literature, p. 197

Rudra was very glorious रुद्रो महत्त्वान् Rig. 1-114-11) He was easily propitiated रुद्रम् (Rig 2-33-5) or आशुतोष as told in the Puranas. He showers favour on all (Rig 2-33-7, 6-49-10), and He was the Lord of all the three regions—Ira, Saraswati and Mahi (i.e. Iran, Sapta Sindhu (Afghanistan & Punjab) and India). This is why He is called त्र्यम्बक (the son of three mothers)¹ Above all He was the God of the Vratyas or backward classes². Being the God of the uncivilised people, (Vratya means 'yet to be civilised'), Rudra is accessible to all. These uncivilised people had neither the patience nor the time to learn all the intricacies of the different ceremonials devised by priest-craft. Ceremonials had to be simplified for the sake of the Vratyas and the procedure for the worship of Rudra was very simple. In these respects there was considerable similarity between Mazda and Rudra. But kindness had not been so prominent a feature in Rudra, so Rudra was converted to Shiva (Rig 10-92-9) to make the resemblance complete. Evolution of Shiva out of Rudra is expressed by the Svetaswatara Upanishad in the celebrated shloka रुद्रं यन् ते दक्षिणं मुखं तेन मां पाहि निलम् (4-21), a mantra which has been included in the prayer book of the Brahma Samaj. Rudra was supposed to have two faces (aspects)—a right face and a left face, and in his right aspect, he was known as Shiva.

Shiva now appeared to be the very replica of Ahura Mazda, and was presented to the Indians for acceptance. But the leading Angirases could not be deceived by the change of name. They thought that it was the same Mazda-Yasna that had rebelled against the icon, rebelled against rituals, and rebelled against caste. They put up a stubborn opposition to the worship of Shiva. Their leader was the old sage Daksha, who would, on no account, allow the worship to

1. Keith—Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishad

2. Angirasa Veda—Chapter XV

be celebrated, though he may have to lose his head in the fight.

But the opposition did not avail. The lure of Mazda was much too strong. All the Puranas describe the fate of Daksha, and it is a sight for all the angels to see that the unfailing patron of the Asuras now occupies the place of honour in the pantheon of the Hindus, possessing co-ordinate status with Vishnu.

The opposition of Daksha to the Shiva cult is not an invention of the Puranas. We find it expressed in the proclamation of a sage named Agni

शिवं यत् सन्तं अशिवो जहामि ।

एषत् सख्यात् अरणि नाभिम एमि ।

Rigveda 10-124-2

I would disown Shiva, even if I have to forsake my own people and live amongst aliens.

No doubt the worship of Shiva has now, to a large extent, been Hinduised and icon has entered into it. But originally it was aniconic (Svetaswatara 3-19) and the ideal still persists in the Vira Saiva sect¹. The Shiva cult does not recognise the distinction of caste, stage (आश्रम) and sex.

ब्रह्म च न विशः शुद्धाः क्लियन् चान्नाधिकारिणः ।

ब्रह्मचारी गृहस्थो वा ब्रह्मणो लो अथवा द्विजः ।

वनस्थो वा अवनस्थो वा दक्षिः पाशुपतः व्रती ।

Shiva Gita—16-2

Nor does it encourage ceremonies

न तिसिर् न च मन्त्रं नोपवाचो विधीयते ।

अत्रोत्सर्गणाद् देवी सर्वपापघ्नयो मवेत् ।

Shiva Purana-Dharma Samhita 40-1

And this is the system that Parshu Rama had learnt from Lord Shiva.

1. Maenicol—Indian Theism p. 179

ततः रामः सुकृशयै जगाम हरम् अन्तिके ।
ज्ञात्वा सर्वाणि शास्त्राणि तस्माद् अश्वविदावरः ॥

Shiva Purana, Dharma Samhita 30-34

The attempt of Maharsi Swetaswatara to introduce the ideals of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra was, however, more methodical. His totem Ashwatara (mule)¹ has considerable resemblance to the Ushtra (camel) of Zarathushtra. This resemblance is only extrinsic. But in intrinsic matters, viz. their ideals, the resemblance is much stronger. Let us take up the question of Bhakti i. e. worship through love. This is the special contribution of Zarathushtra (Yasna 32-1). And in Upanishadic literature 'Bhakti' is heard for the first time in Swetaswatara (6-23). The atmosphere of the Upanishads is that of Jnana Yoga. It knows only the Impersonal God (Brahma). Maharsi Swetaswatara, like Zarathushtra, emphasises the importance of the Personal God.

Then again monotheism is the great message of Zarathushtra, and Swetaswatara proclaims monotheism in such strong terms as would not be found anywhere else.

एको हि खद्रो न द्वितीयस्य तस्युः । Swetaswatara 3-2

Kudra is one. He does not stand (tolerate) a second.

Zarathushtra denounced idolatry and Swetaswatara repeats

अपाणिसाधो जचनो यहीता

पश्यत्य् अचक्षुः मृगोत्य् अकर्णः । Swetaswatara 3-19

1. त् and त्त added to an adjective means 'more'—as चाकृत more beautiful. Added to a noun, it signifies 'less'. Thus गोणि a sack, and गोणिकर—a smaller sack, a purse. So अश्वर means a smaller horse, a mule. अरुद्रवत्तम means smallest Zarathushtra, (least of his servants) and not the greatest of the Zarathushtras. Vide, Haug—Essay on the Religion of the Parsis, p. 261.

He catches without hands. He walks without feet. He sees without eyes and He hears without ears.

Zarathushtra had disparaged the caste system and Swetaswatara says that his message is meant for अस्वाधभि (6-21) i. e. persons who have outgrown the need of वर्णधर्म (caste and stage).

Zarathushtra had laid stress on organisation (formation of the Magha) and Swetaswatara preached his gospel to the ऋषिसंघ (6-21)—congregation of saints.

Thus Swetaswatara had been following the footsteps of Zarathushtra, looking to the right face of Rudra. His Upanishad is more systematic than the Sata Rudriya Chapter (Chap XVI) of the Yajurveda, and thus forms the basic scripture of the Saiva sect. Thus India is indebted to Zarathushtra for the development, if not the inception, of the Shiva cult. This belief is confirmed by the tradition that Bhrigu became a Prophet through the grace of Shiva.

मनः शुक्लं उदना देवदेव प्रसादतः Santi Parva 292-14

Not Shiva alone, but Vishnu too, the highest God of Hinduism, appears to be the result of the impact of Zarathushtrianism on India.

Indra, the chief God of the Angirasas, was too much of a warrior. The conception of Zarathushtra, that Mazda was dear to man, and man was dear to Mazda (Yasna—46-2, 44 1, 50-5) pointed to the necessity of softening down Indra. Love should be realised to be the dominant feature in God's character. "We must love the Power to which we submit; otherwise there is nothing religious in our submission, nothing but resignation to a fatality"¹ A God of love and not a God of fear is the ideal that Zarathushtra had preached and the Angirasas did not like to lag behind. Thus Indra grew into Vishnu. This is why a famous name of Vishnu happens

1. Pringle Patison—The Idea of God, p. 137

to be उपेन्द्र i. e. Supra Indra. The following line of the Rigveda points out their identity :

सूत इन्द्राय विष्णवे (Rig 9-63-3)

Brewed for the sake of Vishnu, who is Indra.

That Vishnu evolved out of Indra, and that also as the result of the impact of Mazda Yasna, is not an idle conjecture. The Rigveda states this fact in so many words:

आ वो विनाय सन्ध्याय देव्यः इन्द्राय विष्णुः सुकृते सुकृत-तरः

वेधा अत्रिन्वन् त्रिषधस्थम् आर्यम् ऋतस्य भाने यजमानम् आभजन्

Rig 1-165-5

When worthier Vishnu approached worthy Indra, for the purpose of coalescence, Vedhas conquered the Aryans of Trishadha and made them participators in Rita (Asha).

सध=सह=together. त्रिषध means the three united states—the confederation of the three Iranian States, Parsu (Persia), Prithu (Parthia) and Madhya (Media).

The plain meaning of this Rik is that Vishnu evolved out of Indra, and this evolution of Vishnu out of Indra, synchronised with the time when Mazda had conquered the three Iranian provinces.

In other words, Vishnu appeared on the scene about the time when Zarathushtra sang the hymns of Mazda.

To leave no manner of doubt that Vishnu's origin is due to the inspiration of Mazda-Yasna, the Vedic sage gives to Vishnu the name नवीयसु वेधसु—"Neo Mazda"

यः पूर्याय वेधसे नवीयसे सुमज्जानये विष्णवे ददासति ।

यो जातम् अस्य महतो महि ब्रवत् सेदु श्रवोभिरु वुष्यम् चिद् अन्यसत् ॥

(Rig 1-156-2)

He who brings gifts for the ancient Vedhas (→Mazda) as well as for the high-born newer Vedhas, Vishnu, and narrates the story of the lofty birth of the exalted one (Vishnu), he surpasses his equals in glory.

It would thus appear that Mazda-Yasna is esteemable for developing the ideals of Shiva and Vishnu. Ahura Mazda stands behind the figure of Shiva, and proclaims the need for simplicity. He, Mazda, stands behind the figure of Vishnu and proclaims the need for love. Shiva and Vishnu, jointly as two Ashwins, rule over the land of the Ganges—

युवोर नराः द्विविणं जाहायाम् —Rig 3-58-6)

The two highest gods of Hinduism, Shiva and Vishnu (i. e. the ideals represented by them) are the gifts of Mazda Yasna to India and India cannot be much too indebted to Iran.

It is therefore in the fitness of things that Pour-i-Davood, the poet laureate of Persia, brings back to our mind the long-forgotten story by paying homage to Shiva and Vishnu :

नायद् व विष्णु ज्ञान बीज निगाहदारीण हिन्द

ता के अजु बहरे वतन जान पाये शिव नकुनी¹

Unless you surrender to Shiva your life, for the sake of your mother-land, Vishnu would not give to India protection greater than this.

The attempt at assimilation persisted beyond the Vedic age. The Narayaniya chapters of the Mahabharata (discussed in details previously) is a remarkable instance of the attempt to introduce Ahura Mazda into India under the name of Hari Medhas.

The attempt persisted through the Puranic age. In the Reva Khanda of the Skanda Purana (Chapter 2-4) we find the description of the worship of Satya Narayana. No image is used in the worship, not even the spherical stone (Shaligram Shila—representing the Universe) which is the symbol for Vishnu, nor the elliptical stone (vana linga) which is the symbol for Shiva. No temple is required for the worship. It is conducted under the open sky. All people assembled sit

1. The Iran League Quarterly—April 1933, p. 48 and The Amrita Bazar Patrika March 26, 1933

together and join in the congregational worship without any distinction of caste. The food offered to the Deity is called *serni* (sweets) which is a Persian word—the Indian word is *Naivedya*. The votaries of this cult are called *Pir* (elders) which is another indication of Iranian origin. A sword is used in the service, indicative of the militancy of the Iranian cult.

It is very clear that *Satya Narayana* is the revised name for *Hari Medhas*. "*Hari Medhas*" sounded rather strange to the Indian ear, and so a more familiar name "*Narayana*" was substituted. This substitution is facilitated by the fact, that in the *Mahabharata* itself *Hari Medhas* is identified with *Narayana*. This is how the relevant chapters are called *Narayaniya* chapters. The spirit of *Mazda-Yasna* (aniconic worship) was kept on, even though the term *Medhas* (= *Mazda*) had to be given up in order to make the worship more popular. Thus the name *Narayana* comes in and replaces *Hari Medhas*. But in order to warn the people, that this *Narayana* is not on all fours with the Vedic *Narayana*, but only a re-adaptation of *Hari Medhas*, the adjective "*Satya*" is invariably prefixed to it. He is not mere *Narayana*, but He is *Satya Narayana*.

Some scholars thought that this form of worship was borrowed from the Musalmans.¹ But they overlook that the *Skanda Purana* was in existence in the seventh century of the Christian era². *Sultan Mamud* set his foot on India in 1019 A. D. It is thus clear that the Indians had borrowed the system before the advent of the Musalmans. They must have borrowed it from Iranians other than Muhammedans. They took it from the *Magas* described in the *Bhavishya Purana*. *Wilson* thinks that "the *Magas* were the fire-worshippers of Persia settled in India". Subsequently they came to be incorporated in the Hindu society, and designated as "*Brahmanas of Saka-dwipa*" (*Scythia*)³. The *Magas*

1 *Akshay Kumar Datta*—*भारतवर्षीय उपासक संप्रदाय* Vol. II p. 207

2 *Vincent Smith*—*Early History of India* p. 22

3 *Hodgkiss*—*Persia of India* p. 28

described in the *Bhavishya Purana* had been largely Hinduised for they used to worship the idol of the Sun (*Mithra*). But the devotees of *Satya Narayana* kept up the ideal of *Zarathushtra*. *Bhavishya Purana* however testifies that there were Iranian settlers in India and there must have been interchange of ideals. The next attempt at assimilation was made by *Mahamuni Nanak*, after the influx of the Muslims. He saw through the thin veil and at once realised that what went by the name of *Sufism* was nothing else than the *Chishti* of the *Gatha*. He therefore welcomed it as a Vedic truth,—the message of the *Atharva Veda*. To remove the popular mistake that *Sufism* was a branch of Islam, *Mahamuni Nanak* founded a new sect, the *Sikh Sangat*, which would preach a new type of *Sufism*. This did not think in Arabic categories, and had little to do with Islamic terms. He restored *Chishti* to its original status as a branch of Vedic religion. This is the great glory of *Nanak*.

Sat Guru Nanak greeted the Sufis :

सत्तु मिलिया तिन सोफीजा राखनकट दरबारी (श्री राग 5-1)

The Sufis attain truth and enter into the Court of the Lord.

But at the same time he asserts that *Sufism* is the cult of the *Atharva Veda*—The *Veda* of *Atharvan Zarathushtra* :

कलिमहि वेदु अबर्गु हुआ (आसादी बार—13)

The *Atharva Veda* (which is the root of the principles of *Sufism*) is the proper *Veda* for the *Kali* (modern) age.

And he asks the Muslim Sufis to realise that they are following the principles of the *Atharva Veda*; only they have changed the name of *Khuda* to *Allah*¹.

1 The word "*Khuda*" is Iranian, and not Arabic. Thus the orthodox *Mollas* raised vehement opposition that if prayer is offered in the name of *Khuda*, *Allah* would not accept it, for He does not grant the prayer offered in any language other than the Arabic (*Sali—Faith of Islam—P. 18*).

It may be noted that *Khuda* corresponds to the Vedic term *स्वधा*. In *स्वधा अवरुण* (*Rig 10-129-5*), *Swadha* signifies *Brahma*.

कलिमहि वेदु अथर्वणु हुवा

माड रुदाई अलहु भइया (आसा बार—13)

The Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj follow in the wake of Sat Guru Nanak. Rammohan Roy and Dayananda Saraswati did not accept the scripture of Mahamuni Nanak (the Adi Grantha) but they accepted all his religious principles. This is how Mazda-Yasna exerts its influence on the Angirasa cult even up to the present age.

Let us now turn to the next point, viz. the problem of harmony between the Bhargavas and the Angirasas, as two distinct parts of a composite whole. It would appear from Rik 1-156-2 quoted above that the Rishi recommended the worship of both the Mazdas—the old Mazda (Ahura Mazda) as well as the new Mazda (Vishnu). The theme is taken up and another Rishi suggests that both Devas and Asuras deserve equal worship.

तदु अद्य वानः प्रथमं मनीय ।

येनासुरान् अमि देवान् अराम ॥

Rig 10-53-4

I would now utter the best words, which would make the Devas and Asuras equals.

Another Rishi says that he would do the rites prescribed by both the cults, Deva Yana and Pitri Yana

ये देवयानाः पितृयानाय लोकाः ।

सर्वान् पथः अतृणाः आक्षिपेम ॥

Angirasa Veda 6-117-3

The culmination is reached when sage Atri holds up Rudra to be the common god of both the Deva worshippers and Mazda worshippers.

यक्ष्वा महे सौमन्ताय रुद्रम् ।

नमोभिरु देवम् असुरं दुवस्त्य ॥

Rig 5-42-11

The Parsis would worship Ahura Mazda and the Hindus would worship Deva Vishnu. But when they meet together

to commemorate the common ancestry, let them do honour to Rudra who is both Deva and Asura.

That is the way to establish harmony. There is supreme worth in both the cults. Deva Yasna is true from one point of view and Mazda Yasna from another. There is much that one community can learn from the other. Let them do so in common fealty to Rudra.

We thus see that there is in the Rigveda a good description of the rise and development of Mazda-Yasna. We see how a prophet of Persia, to whom Rigveda gives the name of Rama, started a Magha (church) for the worship of Ahura. It spread over the whole of western Iran, while its opponents flourished in the eastern region. There was an attempt at reconciliation and conversion and re-conversion were frequent. There was also an attempt for the assimilation of Zarathushtrian principles which brought into being the ideals of Shiva and Vishnu. A large number of people however appreciated the worth of both the cults and made an appeal to the Indo-Iranians to join together in doing honour to Rudra.

The graphic description of Mazda-Yasna, as distinct from cursory references, justifies the opinion that the Rigveda is an Indo-Iranian scripture. The beginning of Indian literature may be traced even to the time when Indo-Aryans still dwelt together with the Perso-Aryans¹ "While on the one hand the Rigveda fulfils itself in the later history and literature of India, its roots run deep into the Indo-Iranian and even Indo-European period"² Bactria was the homeland of the Vasisthas³ and it is very likely that some of the earliest hymns to Varuna had been composed in Bactria, that is to say composed by the ancestors of the present Iranians⁴. One may search them out. "Hertel concludes that Afghanistan

1 Weber—History of Indian Literature, p. 5

2 Griawold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 75

3 Griawold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 147

4 Tilak—Orion, p. 217

was the scene of the Rigvedic period" 1. The Angirasa Veda refers to the worship of Varuna in the land of Iran

अचनीचैर् अमः छत्रं चन्द्रतु
पृथिव्याहवो मण्डुका इरिमानु

Angirasa Veda 4-15-12.

May the shaven sages (मण्डुक) of Iran, with the Scripture in their hands pray to Varuna for rains.

A word of comment is necessary in order to understand the import of the above Rik. Prisni is the Upanishad embedded (interspersed) in the Angirasa Veda. It is the gift of Varuna to the Indian Atharvan, the Atharvan who is the friend of Brihaspati,

इः प्रिभिं भेतुं वल्लेन दत्ताम् अवचणे सुदुर्भां नित्यवत्साम्
वृहस्पतिना संख्यं जुवाणः यथावशं तन्वः कल्पयति

Angirasa Veda 7-104-1

Prisni is like a milch cow ever ready with milk. It is the gift of Varuna to Atharvan. One who is friendly with Brihaspati can avail of it.

Prisni was promulgated by Atharvan Vena (Ramachandra?) who had perceived the universe to be the manifestation of one root principle.

वेत्स्य तत् पश्यत् परमं युद्धा यत् सन्न विद्यम् मन्त्रेकरूपम्
इदं प्रिभिर् अदुहन् जायमाना स्वविदो अभिं अन्वत प्राः

Angirasa Veda 2-1-1

(i. e. Prisni preaches metaphysical monism)

Prisni is the gift of Varuna, to the friend of Brihaspati, just as the Gatha (the Upanishad embedded in the Bhargava Veda) is the gift of Ahura Mazda to Zarathushtra, the Spitama (Gatha 29-3, 32-1, 51-15)

In the verse of the Angirasa Veda (4-15-12) quoted above,

1. Whitehead—Indian Literature, p. 307

the Indian Rishi expresses the desire that the Prisni may prevail in Iran as well (in place of the Gatha).

The Rigveda comprises earlier and later hymns (Rig 8-32-13, 7-95-14). It was composed through several centuries.

The earliest hymns are prior to the advent of Zarathushtra while the latest hymns may convey references to Ramachandra (described as Vena). The present arrangement of the Rigveda (as compiled by Vyasa) is not chronological, so that the age of any particular hymn has to be decided by other factors. The hymns belong to different ages. It is therefore difficult to make a definite assertion about the priority of any Veda as a whole. For instance, amongst the metres used in the Yajurveda, seven are qualified by the epithet Asuri, such as आयुरो गारवो, आयुरी पंक्ति, आयुरी उष्णिक्, etc¹. Evidently these mantras of the Yajur Veda were composed after the Bhargava veda (the Veda of Asura worship) came into existence.

In the Homa Yasht (24) we find the statement that Keresanu (कुरानु of the Veda) prohibited the utterance of "apam aivishtish" in his kingdom. अपाम् अविष्टि is clearly the technical name for Angirasa Veda, for रावो देवीर् अभीष्टये happened to be the first mantra of the Angirasa Veda². Thus the Homa Yasht is subsequent to the Angirasa Veda.

A very glaring reference we find in the उग्रमन्यु of the Angirasa Veda (1-10-1). Ugra Manyu is undoubtedly the Sanskritised form of Angra Manyu of the Upanishad. For Ugra Manyu occurs only once in the Veda (in this particular passage) while Angra Manyu is ubiquitous in the Bhargava Veda. This shows that the Bhargava is anterior to the Angirasa Veda.

The Rigveda is the earliest book of the Aryans. "It is impossible to open any book of Indian subjects without being

1. Haug—The Religion of the Parsis

2. Haug—The Religion of the Parsis

thrown back upon an earlier authority, which is generally acknowledged by the Indians as the basis of all their knowledge, whether sacred or profane. This earlier authority, which we find alluded to in theological and philosophical works, as well as in poetry, in codes of law, in astronomical, grammatical, metrical and lexicographic compositions is called by the one comprehensive name, the Veda¹.

It is the book of origins. "For Indian history, religion, philosophy and civilisation, the Rigveda is the book of origins. As prophetic of the lines of future developments, it may also be called a collection of the first fruits"².

The Rigveda is the earliest record of human civilisation. "In the history of the world, the Veda fills up a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to the time of which we have no records anywhere, and gives us the records of the very words of a generation of men, of whom otherwise we would form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjectures and inferences. As long as man continues to take interest in the history of his race, the first place in the books of record will belong for ever to the Rigveda"³.

The Iranians can be as much proud of Rigveda, as the Indians, for the Rigveda is to a large extent Iranian in origin. Both the Bhargava Veda and the Angirasa Veda are its off-shoots. "Brunhofer, the Ishmael among Sanskritists lays hold of the fact that the roots of the Rigveda run deep into the Indo-Iranian period. It is for him as much an Indo-Iranian as an Indian book"⁴.

The Rigveda does not ignore the Pitri Yana cult (Mazda-Yasna). It gives as much information about it as of the Deva Yana cult. Nor does it pay less respect to the Bhrigus

1. Maxmüller—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 9
2. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 5
3. Maxmüller—History of Sanskrit Literature p. 63
4. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 78

(champions of Mazda Yasna) than it does to the Angirases (champions of Deva Yana). The Rigveda tells us how the movement started by the Iranian prophet spread over the western regions while the eastern people stuck to Deva Yana. It provides grounds for inferring that the ideals of both Shiva and Vishnu are the results of the impact of the Mazda-Yasna on the Indian religion. It apprises us that Rudra is the God who is common both to Deva Yasna and Mazda Yasna, and even the name of Ahura Mazda (Asura Vedhas) is applied to Rudra.

यथा हृदयं सुतवः, दिवो वरुन्तश्च अमुरस्य वेचतः शुभानम् तथेद् असत् ।

Rigveda 8-20-17

May that happen, which the youthful sons (devotees) of Rudra desire—Rudra who is Deva (दिवो) and also Asura Vedhas.

When even the name Ahura Mazda (Asura Vedhas) occurs in the Rigveda, it is idle to say that the Rigveda is quite ignorant of the reformation started by Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. The attempt to drag down Zarathushtra to 1000 B. C. is ridiculous indeed.

We may therefore leave out the question of his age and turn to the reasons which led Atharvan Zarathushtra to start a rival movement and a new church. The greatest desire of the holy prophet was no doubt to realise Mazda, to experience God. It was for this purpose that he left home in early youth and adopted a life of austere discipline in the Sabilan hills. When he succeeded in getting a vision of Mazda and communing with Him, it became clear to his mind that a plethora of ceremonies is more a hindrance than a help for getting access to Mazda. He wanted to teach this important truth to the people at large, to make the way of God-realisation easy for them. He was not satisfied with his own salvation only, he wanted to lead others too, safe over the Bridge of Selection (Gatha 46-10). This was the main object of his starting the

new Church. But he was prompted also by national considerations. Maha Ratu Zarathustra did not believe in "telescopic philanthropy" and thought that charity should begin at home (नवदितां गृह्यां Gatha 50-3). He wanted to save the Aryan people who were being frequently attacked by the Turanians (Mongolians) on the north and the Panis (Semites) on the west. The Rigveda refers to the hostility of (the Turvasus and) the Panis (10-108-4) and the Avesta speaks of the invasion of the Turanians (Jackson—Zoroaster-Chap IX). Maha Ratu Zarathushtra thought that the Aryan people must be united. They should learn to stand up as one man, if they wanted to resist the onslaught of the aggressive foreigners. He thought of organising the nation,—organising the strength of the village, the province and the country (Gatha 81-16). Apart from the question, that iconolatry is apt to give rise to a confusion,—the confusion of identifying the icon with God (of thinking that God does not reside outside of the icon), iconolatry stands in the way of national unity. When each group of people sets up a separate icon as the object of worship, dissension and strife is bound to follow and national solidarity quickly comes to an end. So Maha Ratu Zarathushtra decided that iconolatry must go, at least for the sake of national unity. Similar is the case with caste division. There may be merit in it, so far as it helps to transmit hereditary skill, but there is no doubt that caste distinction is a strong obstacle to the integration of the nation. So Zarathushtra decided that caste division should also be discarded. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra also saw that the people must learn to defend themselves against the enemy before they think of progress and prosperity. So he spoke in praise of militancy. This has earned for Zarathushtra the title of "the warrior prophet" and the Padma Purana went so far as to say that though Parsu Rama is an avatar, he does not deserve to be honoured like the other avatars, on account of his excessive militancy.

नोपात्वं हि भवेत् तस्य शक्यावेशान् महात्मनः.

Padma Purana—Uttara Kanda 93-392

It is for us to realise that the view of the Padma Purana is very erroneous. Mahabharata had rightly appreciated the worth of the Kshatriya.

दश-श्रोत्रियमः राजा इत्येष मनुः अजवीत् ।

Adiparva 41-31

Manu has said that one Kshatriya is worth ten Brahmins.

It is through Kshatriyashood that one can reach the status of the Brahmin. Unless one has the power to retaliate, all talk about forgiveness is only a veil of cowardice ; that does not deceive anybody.

We should therefore dismiss the opinion of the Padma Purana and appreciate the greatness of Parsu Rama and re-instate him with all honour which is due to him as the first prophet of the Aryan race. And to atone for the previous neglect we should take up his gospel (the Gatha) with as much devotion as we entertain towards the gospel of Ramachandra (the Prisni).

In any case there was, at the time, a crying need for a gospel like the Gatha. For, over and above teaching the the most correct method of God-realisation, it taught the lesson of national solidarity as the Aryans were surrounded by enemies on all sides. The trouble still persists, and so the utility of the Gatha has not ceased. For the sake of organisation Maha Ratu Zarathushtra inculcated the lesson of one God (मज्झिमो सखारे महिस्तो, 29-4), one Prophet (आम् मोद इवा विश्वो 29-8), and one Scripture (यथा इमं मेनाइ चावओचा चा 45-8), and emphasised the need of militancy (ये वेरेजेनाइ वड्ढीम् दात् फूसतीम् 49-7), and the Iranians became such a powerful nation that the whole of western Asia and eastern Africa bowed to them, and the expedition of Marathon and Thermopylae caused terror to the most advanced of the European nations. It is only when the Sassanians took to

paying more attention to the rules of the Vendidad than to the principles of the Gatha, that the downfall started.

The reformation of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra brought about a change in the social structure of the Indo-Iranians. The Angirasas had adopted the four-fold caste and the four-fold stage. The Bhargavas stick to one stage (viz. that of the house-holder) and to one caste (viz. that of the Kshatriya). Zarathushtra is the pioneer of the prophets who uphold to man the ideal of a caste-less caste.

It is to be noted that Mahabharata appreciates the view point of Atharvan Zarathushtra when it says that the stage of the house-holder is the main stage—the other stages are subordinate to it, being dependent on the house-holder for their livelihood

यथा मातरम् आश्रित्य सर्वे जीवन्ति जन्तवः ।
तथा गार्हस्थ्यम् आश्रित्य वर्तन्ते इतराश्रमाः ॥

Santi Parva 275-6

Just as the babies cannot live without the mother's breast, so the other stages cannot live without sustenance from the house-holder.

About the caste-division also, the Mahabharata says that as all people are equally affected by desire and anger, fear and temptation, hunger, thirst and fatigue, there is no sense in dividing them into separate castes.

कामः क्रोधः भयं लोभः शोकश्च विना क्षुधा श्रमः ।
सर्वेषां नः प्रभवति कस्माद् वर्णो विभिवते ॥

Santi Parva 186-7

It is to be noted that all the nations of the world have accepted the ideal of caste-equality enunciated by Zarathushtra, first of all. Islam in particular has adopted Zarathushtra's system *in toto*, as it subscribes also to the ideal that the outstanding caste should be of the Kshatriya type (Gatha 49-7).

"Muhammad did not know that he had borrowed many Zarathushtrian ideas. He believed that their source was Jewish and was unaware that the Koran was, so to speak, second edition of the Zend Avesta"—Dozy¹.

We find that in the age of the Mahabharata caste system was no longer current in Iran. Shalya, the king of Madra (Media) had, at the request of Duryodhana, agreed to serve as a charioteer to Karna. Shalya's insinuations against the bravery of Karna irritated him, and he taunted Shalya by saying that his people had no regard for the purity of the caste.

तत्र वै ब्राह्मणो भूत्वा ततो भवति क्षत्रियः ।
वैश्यः शुद्रश्च बाहिकस्य ततो भवति नापितः ॥

Karna Parva 46-6.

The Vahika (Bactrian-Median) has no regard for caste. To-day he is a Brahmin, the next day he is a Kshatriya, and the day after he is a Vaisya, or a Shudra or a barber.

That the reference is to an Iranian tract (and not to any province within India) is made more definite by the following passages of that interesting dialogue.

मद्रकेषु च संसृष्टं शौचं गान्धारकेषु च ।
राज्याजक-याज्येषु नष्टं दत्तं हविर् भवेत् ॥

Karna Parva 40-29

In Madra (Media) there is scant regard for family ties and in Gandhara (Afghanistan) scant regard for purity. In these provinces, Kshatriyas happen to be the priests, so all their Yajnas become ineffective.

आविष्कं औष्टिकं चैव क्षीरं गार्हभं एव च
तद्विकाराश्च बाह्रीका खादन्ति च पिबन्ति च

Karna Parva 44-36

The Vahikas (Bactrians) are accustomed to drink the milk of the sheep, the camel and the donkey.

1. Claud Field—Persian Literature, p. 33.

आरट्टा नाम ते देशाः बाह्रीकाः नाम ते जनाः

Karma Parva 44-54

The people are called Vahika (Bahika-Bactrian) and the city is Aratta (Herat).

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra introduced a remarkable change in the philosophical outlook as well. The force that Rudra employs for creating and dissolving the universe was divided by the Angirasas into three kinds, viz.—Tamas, Satwa and Rajas (i.e. the out-going, the in-coming, and the equipollent force). Maha Ratu Zarathushtra saw clearly that the Rajas may not be said to be a separate force. It was merely the state of equilibrium between the action of the other two. And following the principle of 'Occam's razor' he discarded the Rajas altogether. According to him there were only two forces (Manyus),—the Angra (centrifugal) and the Spenta (centripetal). The conception of Zarathushtra is more logical and we find in the Rigveda a verse which upholds the two-fold division, instead of the three-fold which became more current later on :

सप्तध्रीचूर् स त्रिधूर् वसानः
आ वरीचर्ती सुवनेषु अंतः

Rigveda 10-173-8

The Lord rotates all along with His two forces, the Sadhrichi (centripetal) and the Vishuchi (centrifugal) and that is how the universe comes into being. In the matter of practice of religion too, there cropped up some difference between the Iranian and the Indian point of view. Religious discipline falls into four distinct stages.

1. Karma Yoga, or Formation of Character.

Gautama identified himself completely with this part. According to him the sole function of religion is to teach man how to conquer the desire for pleasure and follow the path of conscience.

2. Dhyana Yoga or appreciation of the Higher Self (Introspector Self)

This is the discipline that Vardhamana Jina upholds (following the lead of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)¹. According to him our consciousness falls into two parts—Mind and Soul (Lower Self and Higher Self). Mind is under the sway of pleasure and pain, like and dislike. Soul is the witness of the functions of the Mind. It is merely a spectator, free of all hankering, and is therefore always blissful. And in proportion as a man disregards the mind and learns to identify himself with the Soul (as his real self), he becomes more and more blissful. The function of religion is to teach a man how to take his stand on the Soul.

Karma Yoga and Dhyana Yoga are not so much concerned about the problem of the origin of the universe or the place of man in it. The followers of Gautama and Vardhamana think that the call of duty and the joy of the soul, has greater claim on our attention than the abstruse problems about the creation of the universe, or the existence of a creator. Thus both Buddhism and Jinism are sometimes accused of being atheistic.

3. Jnana Yoga or identification with Brahma.

Shankaracharya is the typical representative of this discipline. The universe exists in and through Brahma (World-Soul or Absolute) and inasmuch as a man forgets the ephemeral world and lives in the eternal Brahma, he is relieved of sin and sorrow, which is the purpose of religion.

4. Bhakti Yoga or Attunement with God through love.

Ramanuja is the champion of this discipline. According to him, God is a Person and not a mere Impersonal Entity. As a Person, God responds to the appeal of other persons (i. e. His devotees) and is interested in their welfare. One cannot reap the highest fruit of religion unless and until he has an experience of the being of God.

1. N. R. Brahma—Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana, p. 126

A complete religion should contain all these four stages—normally the first stage leading to the second, the second to the third, and the third to the fourth. The religions of the Veda and the Upastha are perfect, and therefore they provide all the four stages. But while the first and the last stages, viz. the call of duty (Asha) and the Love of God (Seraoshem) are more prominent in the Iranian branch, the second and the third, viz. association with the spectator-self (आत्मज्ञान) and identification with Brahma (ब्रह्मावुज्य) are more prominent in the Indian branch.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra had a very clear conception of these four disciplines (Yogas) and for their practical implementation, he devised a unique scheme, quite his own, viz. the scheme of the Amesha Spentas. That shows what a profound thinker the holy prophet was. He divided the path of religious journey into seven sections. These seven stations are known by the name of Amesha Spentas (Holy Institutes). "Amesha Spentas" literally means holy immortals, i. e. holy immortal laws. These are the laws of the higher life.

The Amesha Spentas are named as follows :

- (1) Asha (Rectitude)
- (2) Vohu Manas (Conscience)
- (3) Kshathram (Nonchalance) - *Indifference*
- (4) Armaiti (Faith)
- (5) Haurvatat (Belief in Soul)
- (6) Ameretatat (Belief in Brahma)
- (7) Seraoshem (Love of God)

The first three, Asha, Vohu Manas and Kshathram, belong to the ethical sphere (the sphere of Karma Yoga). The next one, Armaiti, is introductory to the higher categories of religion (viz. Soul, Absolute, and God).

Haurvatat belongs to the spiritual sphere or Dhyana Yoga, and Ameretatat to the metaphysical sphere or Jnana Yoga.

The seventh Amesha, Seraoshem comes within the scope of religion proper.

Every rik of the Gatha speaks of one or the other of the Amesha Spentas, and it is not possible to understand the religion of Zarathushtra without knowing the import of the Amesha Spentas. Let us try to see what they mean.

At the bottom of the ladder stands Asha or Rectitude. "To do the right, because it is right, in scorn of the consequence", is the first lesson that Maha Ratu Zarathushtra teaches. But how to know what the right is? Zarathushtra therefore lays down the criterion for determining the right. It is the principle of doing to others what one likes that they should do to him. (उस्ता अद्याइ वद्याइ उस्ता कद्याइ चोत—43-1). It was proclaimed by Jesus Christ to be the golden rule of life, and in our days has been established by Kant as the one rule of ethical conduct. This is the principle; whereas the faculty that points this out, is named by the prophet as Vohu Manas. This is the second Amesha. The next Amesha is Kshathram or intrepidity. All people know what the right course is, but most of them fail to follow it up, because they cannot resist the temptation of pleasure. "We suffer because we sin and we sin because we fear to suffer" is the tragedy of life. Zarathushtra teaches us to get the better of this fear. That is Kshathram. It is the very stuff of the moral life. For there is not much good in knowing what the right is, unless one has got the strength to pursue. Thus Zarathushtra is never tired of extolling Kshathram. Gautama Buddha gave to Kshathram the name 'conquest of desire' (तद्नास्य) and made this the very foundation of his religion. These are the three ethical Ameshas.

Next we go up to fourth Amesha, Armaiti (Faith). It comes from are (yes—cf. वादम् in Sanskrit) and maiti (mind)—meaning Yes-mindedness i. e. the attitude of belief. Armaiti however should not be confused with superstition, i. e. accepting as true whatever anybody may happen to say.

It is belief in the words of the Prophets. They are the flowers of mankind, and they spend their whole life in finding out the truth about the existence of Soul and God. It is sheer perversity to dismiss the experience of the very people who alone might give any clue to the solution of the riddle of life. Armaiti asks us to give due weight to the experience of the experts in this science—the adepts, the mahatmas. Yet Armaiti is not blind faith. It is only a provisional acceptance of the word of the Prophet, until one finds for himself the truth of the matter. If, after proper experiment, one finds that what the Prophet teaches about Soul and God is mere fabrication, he is entitled to disbelieve. But the experiment should be conducted in the right manner. This alone is what Armaiti expects us to do.

But what are the beliefs that Armaiti asks us to adopt provisionally. These are *Haurvatat* and *Ameretatat*—belief in one's own soul and belief in the world-soul.

There is in us the possibility of higher consciousness—a consciousness that is higher than that of the mind. Our mental consciousness is dependent on the help of the sense organs. We cannot see without the eye, we cannot hear without the ear. But the Yogis can. The people who have developed the soul-consciousness have not got to rely on the physical organs. A Yogi can see from here what is happening in a distant place; he can foretell that a certain man will die six months hence. Space and time are no obstacles to him. The Sufis always used to possess such occult powers and the race of Sufis is not yet extinct. Clairvoyance and clair-audience and telepathy are not mere myths, except for those who dogmatically stick to their preconceived notions at any cost. Anybody may satisfy himself by witnessing a mesmerical performance, how a medium would eat, at the suggestion of the mesmeriser, handfuls of salt, as if it were sugar. This is how a mind can act on another mind (and his physique too), without taking the help of any physical

means. Aurobindo, the greatest Yogi of the modern age explains in his *Life Divine*, how this "Supramental consciousness" is possible, and how it can be developed. The man who stood first in the highest examination in England, and subsequently shook the very foundations of the British Empire in India, may be credited with at least that much intelligence that you and I have. And Aurobindo believed in Supramental consciousness.

The implication of the possibility of Supramental consciousness is stupendous indeed. If consciousness has not got to depend on the physical organs for its existence, it is possible for consciousness to subsist even irrespective of the physical frame. In other words, the soul can survive death. Thus there is here an inkling of immortality. And Maha Ratu Zarathushtra held out this glimpse of immortality, when he divided, for the first time in the world, consciousness into two parts, gross and subtle, (*Gatha 28-2, 43-3*); in other words, when he pointed out the distinction between Mind and Soul.

But the promise of immortality seems to be unreal until it is shown that such a state is consistent with the scheme of the universe. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra analysed the universe and found that there is a fundamental Reality lying at the root of its manifold objects. It is the Eternal Principle wherefrom the universe arises, wherein it subsists and where-to it returns on dissolution. The universe did not spring out of Zero, and if it were a Zero (as some sophists, like the Buddhists of the Shunya-Vada school, are inclined to hold) it is such a Zero that the universe lay latent within it. It is a Zero pregnant with the universe¹. It is not a mere void; it is a positive entity. This is why the Taittiriya Upanishad says that if Brahma would not have existed, the universe

1. Aurobindo—*Life Divine*, p. 148

would not have come into being, and you and I, and the sophist too, would not have been anywhere.

असन् एव स भवति असद् ब्रह्मति वेद चेत्
अस्ति ब्रह्मति चेद् वेद सन्तम् एनं ततो विदुः

Taittiriya—2-6

If one denies the existence of the Brahma (the source wherefrom the universe arose), *ipso facto*, he denies the possibility of his own existence.

Along with the Upanishads, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra gave to this fundamental basis of the universe the name of Brahma (Vahma). And belief in Brahma he called by the name of Ameretat for without there being an Eternal Principle at the root, all talk about immortality (eternal existence) is bound to end in smoke. Belief in Soul (Urvan) and belief in the world-soul (Brahman) are the two basic facts of religion. Thus Haurvatat and Ameretat (as they are called in the Gatha) are two very important Ameshas in the scheme of Zarathushtra. Islam took them over and described them as angels, under the names of Harut and Marut¹. Hafiz composes a beautiful song with a pun on their names.

इत्क बाशद गर तपुरी अज गदाहा स्त रा
ता बकामे दिल बेबीनद् दीदहू मा स्त रा

The identification of the Vahma of the Gatha with Brahma of the Upanishads may raise strong protests from the orthodox pundits as being a new interpretation of the Gatha, not supported by traditional exegesis. But there was continued intercourse between the two sections of the Aryan people, and just as the word Angra Manyu was borrowed by the Angirasas (and converted into Ugra Manyu—Angirasa Veda 1-10-1) similarly Bhargava Veda might have borrowed "Brahma" from Angirasas. But leaving aside the question

1. (i) Koran—2-95

(ii) Blair—Sources of Islam, p. 35, p. 46

of borrowing (based on verbal argument), the philosophy of Monism, which is represented by the word Brahma, is very patent in the Gatha. Zarathushtra prays for the end of all duality (Sukta 48-9). Is there any difference between this and the philosophy of non-dualism (अद्वैतवाद) which Vivekananda preached in America? And lest this metaphysical monism (अद्वैतवाद) is attempted to be explained away as ethical monism (समदर्शन), the Holy Prophet makes mention of the two matters separately. In Sukta 32-16 there is ethical non-duality (i. e. equality of all men, there being the same self in all) and in Sukta 48-9, he speaks of metaphysical monism i. e. the assertion that Brahma (Absolute) is the sole Reality—the one Substance of Spinoza. All other substances have secondary existence, being only derivatives of the Absolute. Thus Monism (Adwaita) is a main lesson of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. This could not have been otherwise. Without monism as its foundation, monotheism (which is a main creed of Mazda Yasna) also falls to the ground. If the conception of the unity of the ultimate Reality is given up, how can one be sure that the universe was not created by more than one God? Thus the objection that the Vahma of the Gatha does not correspond to the Brahma of the Upanishads, loses much of its force. In any case Zravan Akarana (Yas 13-56, 72—10) represents the same idea, and the conception of Brahma is not foreign to the Avesta. We may therefore go up to the next and the last Ameshas, Seraochem, or devotion. Like the Upanishads, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra does not stop short at Brahma or Impersonal God. He proceeds to Mazda or Personal God. The one is a Principle, and the other is a Person. A Principle goes its own way, unmindful of the effect of its actions on others. A Person takes note of the existence of other persons, of their hopes and aspirations and responds to their appeals. The former is the God of Philosophy, and the latter the God of Religion. The human heart is not satisfied with a God who is equally indifferent to

Swetaswatara while it is implicitly hinted at in the Gatha. That seems to be last word on the point.

It is a matter of great pride for the Parsis to find that Maha Ratu Zarathushtra had offered the solution ages ahead when he said that He who is Mazda, is also Vahma :

अतः होइ वदो न्य वेमाने गरो निदामा Gatha—45-8

This may not be considered as a mere academic discussion which the common man may safely ignore. The solution has stupendous effect on the utility of religion itself. Without a metaphysical basis, i. e. without the conception of Brahma at the background, religion degenerates into superstition. And without a practical application, i. e. without the conception of God as the immediate object of worship, religion remains barren.

It is to the great Super-Prophet of Iran that the whole world is indebted for suggesting the solution that saved religion from degenerating into superstition on the one hand, and from remaining barren and bereft of influence on human character, on the other.

The conception of Brahma is as much necessary for the perfection of religion as the conception of God and the whole trend of the Sufi movement in Iran was to infuse Brahma into Islam. And so far as Islam adopted the conception of Brahma (the "Hu" of the Masnavi)¹ it submitted itself to Mazda Yasna. Islam also thereby saved itself from the blemish of persisting as an imperfect parochial religion, satisfied only with a partial view of the ultimate Reality.

We are now in a position to appreciate the importance of the system of Amesha Spentas that the Holy Prophet had promulgated.

1. सिक्खदे अज्ञाद् अल्प सुम्मे रीं हु (2-1345)

Starting with Asha or Rectitude, which is the minimum requirement of the civilised man, not to speak of the religious man, it takes us to the highest vision of Godhead both in the personal and the impersonal aspects. Thus Mazda Yasna is the simplest religion as well as the most profound. And in the scheme of the Amesha Spentas, the four principal Ameshas are :

- (1) Asha—which represents Karma Yoga
- (2) Haurvatat—which represents Dhyana Yoga
- (3) Ameretat—which represents Jnana Yoga
- (4) Seraoshem—which represents Bhakti Yoga

A traditional interpretation takes the Amesha Spentas to be the Lords of the different spheres of creation such as, water and plant, metal and cattle¹. This is polytheism in disguise. This does not fit in with the severe monotheism of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra. It sins against the omnipotence of Mazda, for the Great Lord is quite competent to run the universe without taking the help of seven deputies. Importation of innumerable deputies (the so-called 'elements') is the feature that is responsible for the unpopularity of the Theosophic movement founded by Madame Blavatsky.

There are others who take the Amesha Spentas to be the seven attributes of Mazda². There is little sense in reducing the number of the attributes of the Infinite to seven only. Then again if they are merely divine attributes beyond the reach of the human beings, a man cannot profit very much by their knowledge. Only if they are also human virtues, a man may strive for their acquisition. Maha Ratu Zarathushtra knew them to be the seven assets (cf षट् सम्पत्ति of the Vedanta) that make the vision of Mazda possible. This is why he prays to Mazda for obtaining them (दाइरी मोह वे गंम्

1. Dhalla—History of Zoroastrianism, chap vii

2. Taraporevala—The Religion of Zarathushtra p. 82

सप्तो—51-7, स्पेन्ता महन्वु—47-1) And if we are to reap the best advantages of the Amesha Spentas we would do well to think of them as the seven stages in the pilgrim's progress towards the realisation of Mazda.

Not the Iranians alone ; some Indians also made a similar mistake. The Mahabharata describes the seven Amesha Spentas as seven hallowed sages.

ये हि ते ऋषयः इवाताः सप्त त्रिंशत्संख्यिनः
तेरु एकमतिभिर् भूत्वा यद् प्रोक्तं शास्त्रं जलमम्

Santi Prava 335—28

There is no harm if we remember it to be merely a figure of speech, as the name of the sage most proficient in that discipline.

The main items of difference between the Indian and the Iranian points of view may here be recapitulated. In social constitution, Iran discarded the institution of caste and stage, and the one caste it established elected the Kshatriya ideal. In philosophy, Iran asserted the two Manyus to be the agents of creation as against the three *gunas* of the Indian. In theological doctrine Iran emphasised monotheism and aniconic form of worship. In the practice of religion Iran laid more stress on Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga and she devised the scheme of the Amesha Spentas (Holy Institutes) for the achievement of the highest object of religion. Iran's crowning glory was the promulgation of rational Bhakti Yoga, based on the recognition of both the aspects of god-head, personal and impersonal.

Let us now try to know something about the locality and the life of the premier prophet who promulgated the glorious religion of Mazda Yasna.

At the outset, it would be interesting to note that the complexion of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra was very fair. This is the meaning of the epithet Spitama. स्पितम is the shortened form of स्पितरम, whose Sanskrit equivalent is श्वेततम—white-most. The fame of his complexion had spread to India and

the Harivamsa describes him (or his duplicate in India, if one so likes) as very fair.

शौरं अग्नि-शिखाकारं तेजसा भास्करोपमम्
भार्गवं रामं वासीनं मन्दरत्वं यथा रश्मिम्

Hari Vamsa—Vishnu Parva 32-31

As a matter of fact, the whole family was famous for its white complexion. The popular name of Bhrigu, the champion of the Ahura cult is Shukra. Shukra is a variant of Shukla or white. The family was also known for its iconoclastic tendencies. The Padma Purana relates how Bhrigu had dealt a kick on the breast of Vishnu. Zamad Agni was a scion of the Bhrigu family and Parsu-Rama was his son. But Parsu-Rama also came to be called Zamad Agni. In that age, the son sometimes inherited the name of his father. "As a father transmits his qualities to his son, his name is also occasionally transferred ; something like a modern surname. Thus Vishwarupa, an epithet of Twastar, becomes the proper name of his son. Analogously the name of Vivasvat is applied to his son Mano, in the sense of patronymic Vaivaswata—(Vala Khilya 4-1)¹. Similarly Parsu-Rama is sometimes called Bhrigu. "The Bhargavas claimed descent from the primeval rishi Bhrigu, and they are also called Bhrigus indiscriminately. Thus Chyavana is called Bhrigu (Mahabharata, 18-51) his descendant Richika is equally called Bhrigu (Vayu Purana 55-93) and Richika's grandson Rama Zamadagnya is also called Bhrigu (Mahabharata 7-70-2435)².

Thus we find that Parsu-Rama has indiscriminately been called जमदग्नि (Zamad-Agni), जामदग्नि (Zamad Agni) or षड् (Bhrigu). Zamad Agni and Zarat-Ushtra express the same idea. The root Zam (जम) means 'to eat' and Zamad-Agni means one who eats up fire. Zarat-Ushtra also carries the

1. Maedonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 12

2. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 103

same meaning. The root $\sqrt{\text{दु}}$ means 'to digest' and $\sqrt{\text{सु}}$ which comes from the root $\sqrt{\text{श्व}}$ (=to shine), means sun. (as the cognate word $\sqrt{\text{उष}}$ =dawn, would also attest). Thus Zarat-Ushtra means one who digests the sun, i.e. outshines the sun.

The Puranas repeatedly describe these two deeds to be the outstanding feats of Parsu-Rama viz. that he extirpated the Kshatriyas and that he killed his mother (at the order of his father). Evidently these two acts of Parsu-Rama are to be understood figuratively. For taken in the literal sense, such heinous crimes as genocide and matricide would prove Parsu-Rama to be an abominable rogue, far below the level of an ordinary man, not to speak of his fitness for claiming the dignity of a prophet. Extirpation of Kshatriyas should therefore be understood, as the extirpation of the Kshatriyas as a separate caste. Parsu-Rama was himself a militant prophet, inspired with the Kshatriya ideal, and it is unlikely that the destruction of the people who cherished similar ideals would be his first business. Parsu-Rama established one caste which represented the Kshatriya type and thus there was no necessity of maintaining the Kshatriyas as a separate caste for the protection of the nation. Thus the one-caste principle of Parsu-Rama practically amounted to the annihilation of the Kshatriyas, as a separate caste. This is the meaning of his extirpation of the Kshatriyas. Though the principle of one caste means the abolition of the other three castes as well, the Kshatriyas are singled out in order to indicate the extreme revolutionary character of his reformation, which had scant regard for the Brahmanical hierarchy of the Angirases.

Similarly the murder of his mother is figurative for Parsu-Rama's championing the ancestral Father-cult in religion as against the Mother-cult which was an innovation of the Angirases. The Mother-cult (conception of God as Divine Mother, instead of as Heavenly Father) was subsequently confirmed by Ramachandra, whose untimely evocation

(अदाक-वोचन) of the Divine Mother, is remembered in the annual Durga Puja throughout India. Parsu-Rama had opposed the movement at the inception and therefore Angirases ridiculed him as a matricide. All the world has accepted the Father-cult championed by Parsu-Rama, and they are all matricides according to the Puranas. It would be our misfortune, if we fail to discover Zarathushtra behind the picture of Parsu-Rama.

From pre-historical times Aryayana (Arya land-Iran) and Arya Varta (Arya region-India) were very close to each other, knitted together by race, by religion and by culture. After their separation the Sapta Sindhu area was the common platform where the two people freely intermingled. The area covered by the Indus and its seven branches (i.e. Punjab and Eastern Afghanistan) was known as Sapta Sindhu—the land of seven rivers. Five of its branches, viz. Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusni (Iravati-Ravi) Bipasa (Beas) and Satadru (Sutlej) flow over the eastern tract, and two branches, Gomati (Gomal) and Kuva (Kabul river) flow over the western tract¹. *S* of Sanskrit changes to *H* in Zend, and Sapta Sindhu becomes Hapta Hindu in Zend. Hapta Hindu is profusely praised in the Upastha as the best of all lands². It was shortened by dropping 'Hapta' and gave rise to the name "Hindu" as the designation of the Indians³. The area covered the major portions of the Punjab and Afghanistan. This is how Hertel concludes Afghanistan to be the scene of the Rigvedic period⁴. Rigveda gives to Iranian culture the name of Ira ($\sqrt{\text{इरा}}$), the Indian culture the name of Bharati ($\sqrt{\text{भारती}}$) and to the joint culture of them both, which prevailed in the Sapta Sindhu area, the

1. Macdonell—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 141

2. Vendidad—Pargard 1.

3. Chandra Kanta Tarkalankara—Calcutta University Fellowship

Lecture on the Vedanta.

4. Winternitz—Indian Literature, p. 307

name of Saraswati (सरस्वती). These three ideals have been honoured as angelic (देवी) and have been praised together in numerous passages of the Rigveda. We may cite here one of them.

आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोपा इला देवेभिर् मनुष्येभिर् अग्निः
सरस्वती सरस्वतेभिर् अर्षाहृ तिलो देवीर् बहिर् इदं सवन्तु

Rigveda 7-2-8

O Agni, may these three presiding deities, viz : that of India (भारती), Iran (इला) and Sapta Sindhu (सरस्वती) take their seats here on the grass, along with the divine men thereof.

'Saraswati' is the religious name of the river of which 'Sindhu' is the secular name. Sindhu is the general name for a river, and the Sindhu (Indus) being the largest river of the area was known as "the river". On account of its seven branches the Saraswati is described as सप्तधा सिन्धुमाता (Rigveda 6-61-10, 7-36-6). Major portion of the Rigveda was written on the banks of the branches of the Saraswati (Indus), and in gratitude for this, people of later ages referred to Saraswati as the goddess of learning—goddess of Veda (knowledge). It is in Saraswat area, that Panini the greatest grammarian of the world was born. He has been called Salaturiya, for Salatura was the name of his native village¹. It is now known as Latar and lies about seven kilometres from Und². The rules of Panini govern the Zend as much as they do the Sanskrit. For out of the ten Lakars (tenses and moods) dealt with by Panini, the क्त्वे form is the normal past tense in the Gatha, while it is very rarely met with in the Veda.

Maha Ratu Zarathushtra was born in Western Iran, in the town Raji, now known as Rai, which is not very far

1. Maxmüller—History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 249
2. Foucher and Hargreaves—Ancient Geography of Gandhara, p. 27

from Teheran, the present capital. His father Paurushaspa (पुरुषस्प) was a descendant of the famous emperor Manuchihar. Like Gautama Buddha, Maha Ratu Zarathushtra came from a royal family. He has been called the Prince of Raji (नरेपीय राजीरा—Gatha 53-2). He came in the 15th generation after Manuchihar, who himself belonged to the 27th generation from Jamshed, the traditional earliest king of Iran¹. Yamshed is the shortened form of यमः श्वेतः । श्वेतः comes from the root क्षि इक्षति to rule (Nighantu 2—21). We find the root in परिक्षित, or परीक्षित (all ruler) the grandson of Arjuna. Thus Yamshed means Yama, the king. In India, Yamshed is designated as simply Yama, though he is called a king (cf. यमं राजर्षं वदन्तु अग्नि मन्वारभामहे—the mantra of commencing Pujas). Yama and Manu are two brothers being the two sons of Vivaswan (Sun). Thus both of them are called Vaivaswata—(वैवस्वत मनु and वैवस्वत यम). Vaivaswata becomes Vaivanhato in the Zend². From Yama descended the kings of Iran and from Manu, the kings of India.

Pargiter in his well-known-book, 'The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition' gives the genealogical tree of the descendants of Manu. From this it would appear that Ramachandra belonged to the 65th generation after Manu and Sri Krishna to the 94th generation³. As Zarathushtra belonged to 42nd generation after Yama, the brother of Manu, he was considerably earlier to Ramachandra and Sri Krishna. This also refutes the surmise of the European scholars that Zarathushtra belonged to 1000 B. C. For the age of Sri Krishna (i. e. of the Mahabharata war) cannot be dragged down later than 1500 B. C.

Like his spiritual successors, Ramachandra and Sri Krishna, Zarathushtra also belonged to a royal family, i. e. the Kshatriya

1. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Iran, p. 19
2. Macdonell—Vedic Mythology, p. 139
3. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 147-148

caste. The caste system had not, however, become so rigid in those days. Only in one verse of Rigveda (10-1-29) we find the mention of the four castes. This is how Vishwamitra, though born a Kshatriya, could become a Brahmin. This is not a solitary case. We find that a number of Kshatriyas (like Garga, Maudgalya, Priyamedha) became Brahmins. They were known as "Kshatropeta Brahmanas"—Brahmins who came out of Kshatriya stock.¹ This accounts for the fact that though Zarathustra came out of the Kshatriya stock (royal family), Parsu Rama is considered to be a Brahmin in India. It seems that like his maternal uncle Vishwamitra, Parsu Rama also started a Kshatriya and became a Brahmin. The Puranas described the same fact in the reverse way, viz. that Parsu Rama started as a Brahmin and became a Kshatriya. We may remember in this connection the statement of the Avesta (Farvardin Yasht—88) that Holy Zarathushtra was the first priest, the first warrior and the first husbandman.² The name of the father of Zarathushtra was Paurushaspa and the name of his mother Dugdhaba. Something unusual happened at the birth of the child. All children start weeping on coming out of the mother's womb, but Zarathushtra began to smile. The tradition was so well known that even the Roman historian Pliny mentions the fact.³ The laughter is prognostic of the future greatness of this unique child—prognostic of the fact, that this infant will one day teach the people, how one can be optimistic in spite of the hostility of his immediate environment. At the age of fifteen Zarathushtra wore the sacred cord (Jumar). In Indian language this is called Nevita. The cord is called उपवीत—दशोपवीत when worn on the left shoulder, प्राचीनवीत when worn on the right, and निर्वीत when worn round the neck or waist.⁴

1. Pargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 248
2. Biliimoria—Zarathushtrianism in the Light of Theosophy, p. 126
3. Taraporewala—Religion of Zarathushtra, p. 28
4. Tilak—Orion, p. 16

Serious-minded as he was, young Zarathushtra wanted to know what the end of life is, and at the age of twenty, he left his father's house determined to solve the riddle of life. He went over to the Sabilan hills, standing on the lake Urumiya in the province of Azarbezan, and took up a life of austerity and meditation. At the end of ten years of intense devotion, when Zarathushtra was thirty years old, he obtained the highest illumination. Abura Mazda appeared before him and taught him all the mysteries of religion.

Zarathushtra now began to preach. He went from place to place and proclaimed the religion that Abura Mazda had taught him. People listened to him, but were very slow to accept his message. They were very hesitant. Zarathushtra disparaged ceremonials (Sukta 30-6) and said that Mazda is accessible through love alone (Sukta 32-1). People were accustomed to ancestral rites, and they did not like any innovation. Zarathushtra preached for twelve years, but without considerable success. The brave prophet persisted and at last arrived at the court of Vishtaspa. He was the king of Balkh (Bactria). He was a mighty king and deeply religious, like Ashoka, Constantine and Akbar in later days. Vishtaspa greeted the holy prophet and adopted the new religion. Zarathushtra was 42 years of age when Vishtaspa and his family were converted to Mazda Yasna. This was a turning point in the history of the Zarathushtrian creed. For the conversion of Vishtaspa became the most important news of the day.

Balkh is not far from India, and eminent sages therefrom came to the court of Vishtaspa to refute the religious philosophy of the new church. One such sage was Naidyah Gautama¹. He can be no other than Nodhas, son of Gotama mentioned in Rigveda (1-10-4 and 1-62-13). Another sage was Changraghacha², which is the Avestic form of Sanskrit

1. Jackson—Zoroaster, The Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 87
2. Jackson—Zoroaster, The Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 85

Sankhyacharya (संख्ययाचार्य). He seems to be sage Pancha Sikha, a great doctor of Sankhya Philosophy, next in authority to Kapila, the founder of the school. Pancha Sikha came to convert Zarathushtra but was himself converted to Mazda-Yasna. The story of his conversion is told in Changraghacha Nama and Dabistan¹. The fact is supported by Indian tradition as well. For the Mahabharata describes Pancha Sikha to be a pancha-ratra (accustomed to five prayers a day) and definitely calls him to be an Asuri (follower of the Asura cult)². Not from India alone, but learned sages from Greece as well, came and became converted to Mazda-Yasna. The story of sage Tianur (or Niyatash) who came from Arum or Rum (Roman Empire) is related in Dabistan³. Such brilliant conversions raised very high the dignity of Zarathushtra, and with the patronage of Vishtaspa, Mazda Yasna spread far and wide.

Zarathushtra was 42 years of age when King Vishtaspa adopted Mazda Yasna. The Prophet lived for another thirty five years, teaching the nation the best way of god-realisation. People flocked to him wherever he went; but there have been and there always are, depraved men who can ill appreciate the greatness of a great prophet. One such disgruntled knave was Arjaspa, the Turanian chief, who engaged a murderer named Vritra Kush for the heinous crime. And when the Holy Prophet was saying his prayers in a shrine in Balkh he was stabbed to death. The death of Holy Zarathushtra, at the hands of a felon is as much deplorable as the death of Sri Krishna, at the hands of a Fowler. These are the people who put Jesus on the cross.

The Angirasas were the easterners. They predominated in the land of the seven rivers (Sapta Sindhu). They were more familiar with the rivers, a maritime people. Thus in

1. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 26

2. Mahabharata—Santi Parva, 218-12

3. Jackson—Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran, p. 26

Iran also they preferred the Mesopotamian area and clustered round the banks of Euphrates and Tigris. Indra is said to have conquered the Panis (Semitics) with the help of the Angirasas (Rigveda 10-82-1, 10-108-4).

In the Purusha Sukta we find the following lines.

यस्यमे हिमवन्तो महिषा
यस्य समुद्रं रसवा महाहुः

Rigveda 10-121-4

They describe the boundaries of the Aryan land. It is bounded on the north by icy mountains, on the south by the ocean and on the west by the Rasa (Ranha of the Avesta—Tigris). The eastern boundary is not noted here.

It thus seems that the Angirasas guarded the western frontier and the Bhrigus, the northern. In any case Rasa formed the western boundary of the Aryan land and Sarana had to cross the Rasa in order to go over to the land of the Panis. (Rigveda 10-108-1). Throughout the Aryan land, the Angirasas and the Bhrigus lived in amity.

Balkh is only four or five hundred kilometres from the border of India. Thus to a resident of Peshawar, Bactria is much more familiar than Benaras. And so the religious movement started in Balkh by Maha Ratu Zarathushtra, rapidly spread over to India. It did so under the lead of the Bhargavas.

The three main provinces of Iran at that time were Persia, Parthia and Media. All of them are mentioned in the Rigveda.

Persia :

सतम् अहम् तिरिन्दिरे सहस्रम् पशान् आददे Rigveda 8-6-46

I obtained (as largess) a hundred coins in Tirindira, and a thousand coins in Parsu.

Parthia :

दुनाशिवम् दक्षिणा पार्थवानाम् Rigveda 6-27-8

The largess that the Parthians give, is beyond the capacity of others.

Parthia and Persia (together) :

प्राचा गन्धन्तः वृद्धपशवो वयुः Rigveda 7-33-1

The Parthians and the Persians proceeded eastward in search of wealth.

These provinces had largely adopted Mazda Yasna, and an Indra-worshipper feels pained at that.

सं मां तपस्य् अनितः सपत्नीर् इव पर्शवः Rigveda 1-105-8

The Persians prick me always, just as a co-wife does a co-wife.

मूषो न शिशना व्यदन्ति माव्यः स्तोतारं ते शतक्रतो Rigveda 10-33-3

O Shatakratu (Indra), the Medians bite your worshipper, just as a rat bites the weaver's thread.

Persia, Parthia, and Media formed together a United State which was known as त्रिविष (triad). (सप्त-सह ; त्रिविष—the three together). The Rigveda (1-15-5) says that as Vishnu evolved out of Indra, Mazda already conquered the United States of Three.

Of these three provinces Parsu was the most important. It gave its name to the whole country. The Indians called it Parsu, but the Iranians called it Parsa. This is the name that we find used in the Behistan inscriptions¹. Parsa subsequently changed to Paras and Persia.

The term Parsu was quite familiar in India. It not only denoted the country Persia but also the race Persians. We find in Panini the rule पशविदि योषियादिभ्यः अन् अलो (5-9-117). This means that "by the addition of the suffix अन्, पशु is changed into Parsava, which means or the race of the Parsus". The commentators note, that the Parsavas were Asuras (followers of Asura cult), weapon wielders (militant) and fond of confederation (into Magha)

1. Hodivala—Panini of Ancient India, p. 3

All the three adjectives point to the characteristic features of the Iranians—particularly the attribute अग्र (followers of Ahura). Thus the rule of Panini confirms the inference that the Parsu of the Rigveda refers to Persia.

We find that many mighty kings mentioned in the Rigveda ruled over Iran. Nahusha and his son Yayati were Iranian kings¹. Nahusha's defiance of Indra, and his discourtesy towards the Brahmins, is narrated in every Purana. Yayati had married in the family of the Bhrigus. Raji was the brother of Nahusha. It is not unlikely that he had founded the city of Raji (the birth place of Maha Ratu Zarathushtra). Raji is said to have been killed by Indra (Rigveda 6-26-8) which implies that he was an opponent of the Indra cult. King Kasu ruled over Chedi (Bactria) and he made a gift of one hundred camels to the sage Kanva (Rig 8-5-30). Bactria is famous for her camels, and it is there that a gift of a hundred camels is possible. The adjoining province of Khorasan derives its name from king Kuru Sravana who ruled there in the Vedic days. (कुरु श्रवणम् आरुणि राजानम् इत्यक्षयम् Rig 10-33-4). The current explanation of the name, as the rising place of the sun (Khur) is fanciful. Puru-Ravas was the king of Afghanistan², and Chayamana was the king of Parthia³.

Eminent Vedic sages lived within the bounds of Iran. When Zarathushtra came into the world, Varuna was the name of the highest God of the Indo-Iranians. Atharvan Zarathushtra changed the name to Vedhas (Mazda). Vasisthas were the special guardians of the worship of Varuna⁴. It is said that Bactria was the homeland of the Vasisthas⁵.

1. Bannerjee Shastri—Asura India, p. 87

2. बटव्याज—वेद प्रवेशिका—p. 16

3. Rigveda—7-15-8

4. Griswold—The Religion of the Rigveda, p. 112

5. Historians' History of the World, Vol. II p. 567

Zarathushtra himself belonged to the family of the Bhrigus (Spitama of Avesta, and Sukra of the Puranas, both meaning 'White'). Zarathushtra refers in the Gatha (48-10) to the iconolatriy of the Angirasas. Thus there can be no doubt about the existence of the Vasishthas,¹ Bhrigus and Angirasas in Iran. The great sage Kashyapa lived in the Caspian area, and it is from him that the Caspian sea derives its name. The eminent sage अत्रि (of which family दत्त आत्रेय is the most famous member) is said to have been the priest of the ह्येह्य (Hyonians or Turanians)². Thus he also lived on the borders of Iran.

The legend of the fight with Vritra was the common heritage of both the Indians and the Iranians. It is the main feat of Indra in the Rigveda, and the Gatha (44-16) also claims the glory for Mazda.

If illustrious kings like Nahusha and Yayati, Puru-Ravas and Chayaman ruled in Iran, and famous sages like Vasishtha, Bhrigu and Angirasa flourished in Iran, then the Rigveda is as much Iranic as it is Indian. In other words, the history of Iran starts with Rigveda, the oldest book of the world, and the age of Zarathushtra must be considerably earlier to 1000 B. C. There is no justification for rejecting the history furnished by the Rigveda. It is evident that in the Vedic age the Indians and the Iranians lived as one people, in spite of the one wing following the Pitri Yana, and the other wing the Deva Yana cult. It would not be surprising if some of the hymns of Varuna had been composed in Iran³, i. e. by the forefathers of the present day Sufis of Iran. It is their glorious heritage.

We have seen how in the Vedic age there was in Chedi (Bactria) a king named Kasu. He had made a gift of one

1. Is there a pun on the word Vahishta so that we find a reference to the Vasishthas in Yasna 28-8: वहिश्तेम् खा वहिश्ता येम् ?

2. Fargiter—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 228

3. (i) Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda, p. 75

(ii) Tilak—Orion, p. 7

hundred camels to Brahmatilhi, son of sage Kapva (Rigveda 8-5-37). Kasu had a son by the name of Vasu. He was a great king, and was also known as Uparichara Vasu, because he possessed an air-ship which enabled him to fly in skies¹. This Vasu is no other than King Vishtaspa of the Avesta. The Mahabharata narrates how a new Veda (the Bhargava Veda) was composed in his time, at the inspiration of seven Amsha Spentas². This Vedic age is, in the Puranas, given the name of Satya Yuga.

Let us now look to the next age, the Treta Yuga, i. e. the age of the Ramayana. We find that in this age, Dasharatha king of Ayodhya had married Kaikeyi, the daughter of Ashwapati, the king of Armenia. Kekaya means the Caucasus region, which included Armenia and Asia Minor. The inference is not based merely on the similarity of the sounds between Kekaya and Caucasus. If we trace the route that the officers took in going to Kekaya in order to bring back Bharata, on the sudden death of Dasharatha, we find that they had to proceed further northwest after crossing Bahlika. That Ashwapati had a fine breed of horses which he presented to Bharata is also suggestive. For the Iranians were famous for equestrian art³. In the next age, we find Shalya, the king of Madra (Media) being praised for efficient horsemanship). When Ayodhya and Armenia enter into matrimonial alliance, there is little doubt that the people were socially one people.

The next age is the Dwapara age, i. e. the age of the Mahabharata. We find therein that almost all the allies of Duryodhana were Iranians. These were (1) Kekaya, the king of Armenia (2) Shalya, the king of Media (3) Sudakshina, the

1. Pradhana—Chronology of Ancient India, p. 62

2. Mahabharata—Sonsi Parva, 335-28

3. Vaidya—Vedic India, p. 294

king of Kamboja (Khorasan) (4) Subala, the king of Gandhara (Afghanistan) (5) Dhrista Ketu, the king of Chedi (Bactria) and (6) Jayadratha, the king of Sindh¹. Is there any marked difference between them and Drupada, Virata, Yudhamanyu and other Indian kings ?

All the three brothers, Dhrita-rashtra, Pandu, and Vidura had married Iranian brides. Gandhari, the wife of Dhrita-rashtra, undoubtedly came from Kandahar. And when Madri ascended the funeral pyre of her husband Pandu, the other co-wife Kunti, addressed her as Vahlki, a daughter of Bactria.

धन्वा त्वमसि बाहिलकी मरुः भान्वतरा तथा

Adiparva, 125-11

She is called a Vahlki, because Madra (Media) and Vahlka (Bactria) happened to be sister provinces. Vidura's wife is definitely called Parasavi—a Persian girl.

अथ पारसवीम् धन्वाम् देवकस्य महीपतेः

विश्वाम् कारवामास विदुरस्य महामतेः

Adiparva, 114-12

The Mahabharata definitely refers to the custom of exposing the dead body (instead of burning it) as an Iranian custom. When the Pandavas decided to live incognito within the kingdom of Virata, they hung up the bundle of their arms on a tree. A corpse was also placed along with it in order to mislead the people. Nakula who hung up the corpse explains it as being consistent with "the custom of our people"

कुलधर्मो अयं अस्माकं पूर्वैर् आचरितोऽपि च

Virat Parva, 5-33

By "our people" Nakula means his maternal relatives—the people of Madra or Media. Karna ridicules Shalya, the king

1. Valdyia—Vedic India p. 19

of Media, as the ruler of a people who are casteless and riteless, and given to drinking the milk of camels and asses. He also mentions Herat (आरट्ट) as the chief city of Media.

आरट्टा नाम् दे शेषा नष्टधर्मा न वान् वनेद

ब्राह्मणां द्वाशमीयानां बाहिलकानाम् अव्यन्ताम्

Karna Parva, 44-32

Not even in the Dwapara age were the Iranians and the Indians considered to be strangers to each other. It was in this age (14th century B. C.) that Indra was being worshipped in Asia Minor, as the Boghaskui inscription tells us¹. It was in this age (15th century B. C.) that "Assara Mazas" came to be worshipped by the Semites as Hommel's discovery of Assyrian records informs us². It was in this age (16th century B. C.) that there reigned in Iraq a king named Dasratha as the Tel-el-Amarna tablet attests³. All these facts point to the unity of the Indo-Iranians and their supremacy.

Let us now turn to the Kali age, or the historical age—the age that started at the close of the great Mahabharata war. The battle of Kurukshetra left the Kurus very weak. The Nagas established themselves at Taxilla and attacked Hastinapur. Parikshit, the Kuru king was killed by them. Janamejaya made peace with them. But the kurus became weaker day by day, and they found it difficult to live with dignity in Hastinapur. One branch of the family moved 300 miles to the south-west and made Kausambi their new capital⁴. Another branch shifted far westward to Persia, and established

1. Griswold—Religion of the Rigveda p. 71

2. Moulton—Early Religious Poetry of Persia p. 73

3. Bloomfield—The Vedic Religion p. 12

4. (i) Pargitor—Ancient Indian Historical Tradition p. 285

(ii) Historian's History of the World, vol II p. 478

at Ansan a great empire which subsequently became known as the Achaemenian Empire. The most powerful emperor of this line is known by the ancestral name "Kuru". We are familiar with its Greek version "Cyrus" and fail to recognise that he is no other than a scion of the Kuru family. In the Iranian inscriptions his name appears as Kurus (کور), and in Hebrew literature as "Koresh"¹. He is recognised as the first great emperor of historical times². Kuru subdued Croesus the Greek king of Lydia, and became suzerain over the whole of Asia Minor. In 588 B. C. he defeated Nabonidas, the son of Belthasar and wrested from him the Babylonian empire³. Cambyses the son of Kuru had conquered Egypt. Kuru had planned the conquest of Europe and the expedition against Greece was carried out by his successors Darius (दर्यावाहु) and Xerxes (क्षत्रपा)⁴. The Bible mentions the name of Kuru with great respect. He has been called there a Mastakh⁵,—the anointed (elect) of God. This it did because Emperor Kuru saved the Jewish religion from extinction. Nebuchadnezzar, the emperor of Babylon, had conquered Palestine and razed to ground the central shrine of Jerusalem. He took away all the learning Jews to Babylon and kept them captive. The Jewery then was a very small community and the likelihood of its existence as a separate cultural unit seemed very gloomy. Emperor Kuru, however, came to their rescue. After he had conquered Babylon, Kuru gave the Jews permission to go back to Jerusalem. His successor Darius allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple. And under the guidance of Prophets like Ezra and Nehemiah Judaism obtained

1. Haug—Religion of the Persia p. 4

2. Wells—A Short History of the World p. 75

3. Ahl—Outlines of Persian History p. 19

4. Sykes—Persia p. 10

5. Haug—Religion of the Persia p. 4

a new lease of life and revived¹. This happened about the middle of the sixth century B.C. The Mahabharata war is said to have taken place in the 15th century B.C. Thus roughly about a thousand years after the Mahabharata war, the Kuru dynasty again came into limelight. But this time it flourished, not in India but in Iran.

The contemporary of Persian Kuru in India was Vatsa, the famous king of Kausambi (550 B.C.). He was the 25th successor of Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna². Thus we can form an idea of the time that passed between the Mahabharata war and the exploits of the new Kuru (Cyrus). Political importance in India had, however, shifted further east and Bimbisara became the most famous king of the period. By this time Gautama Buddha appeared on the scene.

Darya Vahu (Darius) was a worthy descendant of emperor Kuru. In the Behistan inscriptions, we find Darya Vahu describing himself in the following words.

अहमेम दर्यावाहु, क्षत्रियो ब्रह्म, क्षत्रियो क्षत्रियानाम्, क्षत्रियो इक्ष्वर्याम्³

I am Darya Vahu, a great Kshatriya, the Kshatriya of all Kshatriyas, the Kshatriya of all countries.

We hear in this proclamation the proud voice of Duryodhana, the predecessor of Darius, in the Kaurava dynasty of India. This proclamation is very important indeed, in the history of Indo-Iranian compact. Unfortunately its importance has not been fully realised by our historians. Firstly, the language of this inscription is not much different from the language of Ashoka's inscription. That would show that even up to that period, the Indians and the Iranians spoke the same language, though the script was different. This lends support to the assertion of Bartholomae, that Sanskrit was once the spoken language of Iran⁴. The rock edicts of

1. Maedonell—Lectures on Comparative Religion, p. 219

2. Historians History of the World—vol II, p. 478

3. (i) Ahl—Outline of Persian History, p. 119

(ii) Brown—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 62

4. Darmestoter—Zend Avesta (part I) Introduction, p. xxi.

Ashoka are found written in two distinct scripts : the Brahmi, written from left to right and the Kharoshthi, written from right to left¹ but the language is the same. Similarly the scripts used by the Indians and the Iranians were different but the language continued to be the same. Secondly, Darya Vahu calls himself a "Kshatriya". This points unmistakably to his kinship with India. The military caste in Iran is named in the Gatha as Verejena and in other portions of the Avesta as Ratheshtar. That Darya Vahu declares himself to be a Kshatriya, rather than a Verejena or Ratheshtar, is calculated to attest that the imperial Kurus of Persipolis (Achaemenians) retained the memory of the imperial Kurus of Hastinapur.

In 490 B. C. Darya Vahu crossed the Hellespont and attacked Greece. Ten years later his son Kshayarsha (Xerxes) repeated the adventure. On both the occasions Greece escaped defeat, but escaped very narrowly. The story of the defence of Marathon and Thermopylae is on the lips of every schoolboy in Europe.

In order to wipe out the disgrace of Marathon and Thermopylae, Alexander the Great, in 336 B. C., led an expedition against Iran with a huge army. The monarch who ruled over Persia at that time was also named Darius. He was defeated and killed. In 330 B. C. Iran lost her independence and the dynasty of Kuru came to an end. A Puru was then ruling over Panjab. He offered a stubborn resistance to Alexander. Alexander decided to return to Greece but on his way back he died in 323 B. C. In 321 B. C. Chandragupta snatched a portion of Afghanistan from the successors of Alexander. Chandragupta's capital was at Pataliputra in eastern India, which is a long way from Persia and the intercourse between the two countries became a bit slack. It became brisk again through the enterprise of the

1. Vincent Smith—Early History of India, p. 154

Buddhist missionaries. Monasteries were built all over Bactria and a large number of Viharas existed there up to the time of the Muhammadan conquest. (651 A. D.)¹. About 250 A. D. we find Apostle Mani, the great reformer of Sassanian Iran, trying to make a synthesis of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism².

Indian religion attracted the Greek inhabitants of Bactria. King Menander became converted to Buddhism and Heliodorus to Vaishnavism. It is reasonable to suppose that many other Greeks were converted to Zarathushtrianism. Thus Bactria continued to serve as the common platform for the intermingling of Indian and Iranian religion during the predominance of Bactrian Greeks.

Greek power was wiped out by the Parthians and Iran again became free in 250 B. C. when Arsaces ascended the throne of Parthia³. The Parsis are mentioned in the Vishnu Purana and the Code of Manu. These books were composed about 300 B. C. Thus they furnish evidence of Indo-Iranian intercourse during the Parthian period (250 B. C.—226 A. D.).

In 226 A. D. Ardshir Babekan defeated Ardawan the last Parthian King and founded the Sassanian Empire. Sassanians were zealous Zarathushtrians and Iran got back the glory of Achaemenian days. There is an elaborate description of the Magas in the Bhavishya Purana (Brahma Khanda). It mentions the four books of the Avesta and gives a description of the Kushti (Abhyanga) and the Sudreh (Kanchuka) and it notes the name of the Prophet as Jarasabda⁴.

The reference undoubtedly is to the religion of Parsis but it is far from being a correct account of true Mazda-Yasna. For it fails to give prominence to the characteristic feature

1. Geiger—Civilisation of Eastern Iranians, vol II, p. 170

2. Browns—Literary History of Persia, vol I, p. 164

3. Benjamen—Persia, p. 156

4. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India—Chap. X

of Mazda Yasna, viz. its monotheism, aniconism and caste-equality. The description of the Bhavishya Purana agrees more with the corrupt religion of the Yashtas than with the religion of the Gatha. A more representative account of Mazda-Yasna will be found in the Reva Khanda of the Skanda Purana. The worship of Satya Narayana inculcated there is nothing but an adaptation of the worship of Mazda. Ahura Mazda is named Hari Medhas in the Mahabharata, and Satya Narayana in the Skanda Purana. For Hari Medhas is not different from Hari, and Hari is no other than Narayana. The Skanda Purana was existent in the 7th century of the Christian era¹. Thus it was compiled in a period which is prior to the advent of the Muslims in India or Iran. Very likely it bears witness to the intercourse of Indian and Iranian religions during the Sassanian period (226-642 A.D.).

There are other evidences of such compact. Behram Gor the Sassanian king (423-438 A.D.) had conquered a portion of India². 'Gor' means wild ass, and the origin of the Gardavilla dynasty of Malwa is traced to him.

It is said that Behram Gor had married a Hindu princess named Sapiduna and that he paid a visit to the king of Kanauj (A. D. 436). He introduced Indian music and literature into Persia. It was under the Sassanians that the Persians brought chess and 'Arabian Nights' from India.³

On the other hand Skanda Gupta conquered a portion of the territories of Piroj, son of Yazdigird II (457-484 A. D.)⁴ and king Khushru II of Persia received an embassy from king Pulakesin II of Deccan in 625 A.D.⁵

1. Vincent Smith—Early History of India, p. 22
2. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 7
3. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 21
4. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 7
5. (i) Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, p. 22
(ii) Vincent Smith—Early History of India—p. 384

The intercourse persisted even after the Muslim conquest. "The black-eyed and olive coloured Hindus were brushing their shoulders against those of the Muslims in the city of the Khalifs (Baghdad)¹.

The Raghuvamsha, the Mudra-Rakshasa and the Katha—Sarit Sagar make mention of the Persians². These books were composed in the 5th and 6th century A.D. The reference therefore relates to pre-Muslim (i.e. Sassanian) Iran.

While the Sassanians were on the throne of Persia, power had shifted in Europe from Greece to Italy, and when Jesus Christ was born, we find Palestine and Mesopotamia in the possession of the Romans. The Sassanians now came in conflict with the Romans, just as the Achaemenians had done with the Greeks. In their war against the Europeans, the Sassanians achieved greater success and Shahpur I, the son of Ardshir, inflicted a staggering blow on the prestige of Rome by capturing the Roman Emperor Valerian³.

The most famous of the Sassanian Emperors was Naushirvan (Anushir-Ravan). He ruled from 531 to 578 A.D. Arabia then was a province of the Persian Empire and its Satrap ruled over Arabia with his head-quarters at Yemen⁴. Hazrat Muhammad was born in Arabia in 570 A.D. He always used to take pride in the fact that he was born during the reign of Naushirvan, the Just⁵.

At this time there sat on the throne of Constantinople, the (Byzantine) Roman Emperor, Justinian. His predecessor Emperor Constantine had adopted the Christian faith (337 A. D.) By the time of Justinian (527 A. D.) the Greeks had become very semiticised in religious

1. Tarachand—Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 66
2. Hodivala—Parsis of Ancient India, Chap. 2
3. Sykes—History of Persia, p. 32
4. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I p. 183
5. Browne—Literary History of Persia, vol I p. 166