

## THE ĀRYAS AND THEIR ‘CODE OF MANU’

I have adopted the following transcription (after Kanga & Taraporewala) as permitted by my software, while avoiding the encoding of the **ITRANS convention** hoping to make the reading for non-academic purposes generally easier: -

**a** as in **fun**; **ā** as in **far**; **ā̃** (nasal sound **ā̃n**) as in ‘**āvā̃n**’; **ə** as in **fed**, **ē** as in **fade**; **i** as in **fill**; **ī** as in **feel**; **o** as in **for**; **ō** as in **fore**; **u** as in **full**; **ū** as in **fool**. The nasal sounds are **ā̃n** as in **āvā̃n**; **ən** as in the French ‘**trés biən**’, **īn** as in **Ahīnsā** (also pronounced ‘**īm**’ as in Sanskrit **Ahīmsā** and as also in Avestan and Gathic languages) and **ūn** as in Humayūn. The pronunciation of some consonants (as permitted by my software) are ‘**ś**’ for ‘**sh**’, ‘**ṣ**’ for ‘**ss**’, ‘**ṛ**’ for ‘**ri**’.

In the study of the history of the great Indo-Iranian peoples it is very clear their Primeval Homeland in the vast expanse of Central Asia was limited only to the East around the subarctic belt. There does not appear to be any evidence to suggest it was otherwise. History shows the remaining peoples of nations inhabiting the middle and western portions of the subarctic belt up to the very outskirts of Sweden were not Āryas or even had the knowledge of the ‘Code of Manu’.

The culture and beliefs of the Āryas - these *eastern inhabitants of the subarctic belt, the early Proto-Indo-Iranians* were emerging slowly in evolution from the tapering end of the *primitive culture of the Stone Age (c. 4000 BCE)* just prior to the arrival of the *Early Bronze Age (c. 4000-18000 BCE)*. The enhancement of the way of life, which the possession of metals seemed to confer on them were enormous. The transition from the Stone Age of an extremely primitive nomadic life to the Bronze Age of a more settled state of living in this region was not without pious retention of the memories and appreciation of certain lingering aspects the old ways of living.

### Fire power

The possession of the precious Fire was kept strictly in the hands of devout select experts (Zarathushtra’s *Āthravans* - Fire Priests) during the Middle Bronze Age (1800-1200 BCE) who tended the glowing ambers in special cage-like containers. They would have spent sleepless nights to ‘keep the ambers aglow perpetually’ while working in shifts. Although kept hidden in caves, there would have been occasions, in times of floods and torrential rains and invasion by predator tribes to steal their Fire and livestock during their nomadic movements, when they had to rekindle more Fires through the, then, unpredictable, lengthy and tedious process of friction, using pointed sticks and dry hay.

Those groups and settlements that had made adequate arrangements to possess and maintain the Fire, certainly, had a more advantageous life style - creation of warmth to maintain their body immunity and maintain health, facility to cook and obtain hot water....etc. *Fire power, then, as it is now (of a different kind) was still very much the strength of each settlement.* Reverence to this most vital element, without which normal health would have remained very precarious, if not entirely impossible, was naturally to be expected. Both the Vedic Āryas and the Iranian Āryas continued this reverence in their sacred Fire rituals of *Agni Pujā* and *the worship of the perpetually kindling Āthra respectively.* Even to the present day more than

5000 years later, the memories have lingered unabated. To this day, a deeply embedded spiritual devotion to the sacred Fire is very much alive and is followed rigidly among the followers of Zarathushtra in the '*sanctum sanctorum*' of their Fire Temples, where the Fires are kept aglow perpetually by the priests in shifts. The Vedic Indic descendants of India also continue to enact their organized '*Agni Pujās*' as ceremonious thanks giving.

The Zoroastrian's of India in their Exilic State as refugees from Iran after the fall of their last Sassanian Dynasty (641 CE) have their Holy Fires burning perpetually in their Temples, which they had brought from Iran. These perpetual Fires date back over millennia from the Median, Achaemenian, Parthian and Sassanian dynasties. Some might even date from as early as the Peshdadian and Keyanian Dynasties of the Primeval Homeland. Indeed, not unlike their Stone Age ancestors did during invasion, there was an early instance when, in their 'Exilic State' in India they had to hide the parent Fire in Bahrot Caves for 12 years near their first Indian settlement, Sanjān, north of Mumbai after an invasion of the region by Alaf Khan, a general of Mahmud Tughlaq in 1393 CE.

Such was the limitless human spirit and ingenuity of these early Indo-Āryas in their Primeval Homeland that they were able, now in their settled state during the tapering end of the Stone Age, to devote time to other pursuits to enhance the quality of their lives. Among their exploratory diggings they began to identify copper ore (and soon, other subsidiaries like tin and lead) in their early diggings and learn the art of extracting these metals. Soon, they found ways to melt and mix them into alloys and mould them into shapes as useful articles in their new way of life. The use of earth and clay to make pottery and other containers continued.

The demand for this innovation became so intense that, later, a City, *Pāikhand*, meaning *Copper City* west of Samarkhand) grew as a major trade centre in the Valley of the River Ferzana to cope with the multitude of caravans from nations in the, then, known Classical World's in their ever-seeking demand for this precious metal alloy, *Bronze*. Gradually, the traders from these nations who had once arrived to purchase Bronze, themselves learnt to excavate copper and lead and tin and make useful domestic and industrial gadgets of their own. The time line of the Bronze Age of these other nations in the known Classical World occurred at a much later date, certainly much later than the one in the Primeval Aryan Homeland. Regretfully, the arms race that followed then precipitated more deadly encounters during hostilities and in the battle fields.

### **Primeval Homeland of the Āryas and their Law of Manu**

The evolved '*Āryanism*' of the Indo-Iranians by the *Middle Bronze Age (c. 1800-1500 BCE)* was at no time ever documented as having extended westwards to the outskirts of Sweden or envisaged at the time as a racial concept. Shockingly, it was the much later political and several detestable influences, even among academia, that made it falsely appear so (often referring to the pretext of linguistic affiliations). The alleged physical appearance and the way of life through linguistic connections to Indo-European languages further fuelled the mistaken interpretation and gradually made to become an established source of the miscued connection. As in all human endeavors leading to progress the dialectic phenomenon of opposites somehow crept in. The false concept was later further distorted; the distortions being fuelled for iniquitous purposes. The Book of Manu / Code of Manu / the Law of Manu (Vedic **Manu-Samhita**, **Manu-smṛti** or **Manava Dharmaśāstra in 12 chapters & 2694 verses**) mentions Manu as the progenitor of mankind, which, in fact, in one Indo-European language is '**Man**'.

During this *Middle Bronze Age (c.1800-1500 BCE)* a great schism occurred into the *Vedic/Indic Āryas* and the *Gathic/Iranian Āiryas* as intelligent minds clashed to seek and arrive at some mutual solution. This was, to my mind, the earliest known human concept of mutual tolerance of differences in thought and ideas leading to a way of co-existence, which was thought millennia later by *Solon (the Greek law-maker) as late as (c. 638 BCE-558 BCE)* in Athens to combat the dictatorial and cruel rule of ‘Tyrants’ during the Dark Ages of Greece (*c. 1200-800 BCE*). He was to be later labeled as one of the early proponents of ‘*Democracy*’. Coincidentally, this occurred during the time and rule of an Indo-Āryan - *Cyrus the Great (lived 599-529 BCE)* who had already introduced a New World Order (in the, then known Classical World) based on equality among the wide ethnic and cultural diversity of the subjects in his vast Empire extending from the Indus river to the outskirts of Anatolia.

Outstanding humanistic thoughts began to be formulated and composed (in the absence of writing. There is no word for ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ in the Gathic and Avestan languages. The precise orderliness of Nature observed was formulated into a strict spiritual observance in daily life, both by the Vedic people as *Rta* and by the Gathic people as *Āshā*. During this golden period of Āryanian enlightenment, of human innovations and dispersion of knowledge the Vedic Rishis composed the Rg *Veda Samhita* and the Prophet Zarathushtra, the Āiryanic Gathas around the same time, each in their own sister language, the Vedic Sanskrit and the Iranian Gathic. I like to call these two major humanistic endowments, the Vedas and the Gathas put together, as the *Bible of all humankind*.

My mentor, the late Emerita Professor Mary Boyce, University of London, seemed to indicate by quoting in her book (see References) that, spiritually, it was clearly Zarathushtra’s thoughts that had shaped a primal golden era for all humankind to follow subsequently.

***"Zoroastrianism is the oldest of the revealed world-religions, and it has probably had more influence on mankind, directly and indirectly, than any other single faith."***

***and***

***"Zoroaster was thus the first to teach the doctrines of an individual judgment, Heaven and Hell, the future resurrection of the body, the general Last Judgment, and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body.***

***These doctrines were to become familiar articles of faith to much of mankind, through borrowings by Judaism, Christianity and Islam; yet it is in Zoroastrianism itself that they have their fullest logical coherence...."***

Also, her much acclaimed 1987 lecture (published in 1988 & 1989) ‘*Zoroastrianism: A shadowy but powerful presence in the Judaeo-Christian world*’, London and Van Eck, Stephen’s, ‘*Zoroastrianism: The Forgotten Source*’ are worth reading.

Millennia hence, and, as late as 1825 long after *Anquetil du Perron’s* death and more than fifty years after the appearance of his devoted translation that the Āiryanic Avestan texts themselves began to be studied by Sanskrit scholars. The close affinity between the two languages had already been noticed by different scholars; but in 1826, the more exact relation

between the Sanskrit and the Avesta was shown by the *Danish philologist, Rask*, who had travelled in Persia, and who had brought back with him to the Copenhagen library many valuable MSS. of the Avesta and of the Pahlavi books. [For details see '[The First European Translation of the Holy Avesta](#)': Avesta - Zoroastrian Archives [www.avesta.org](http://www.avesta.org) ]

The treatise - **Manava-Dharmaśāstra**, composed by the law-giver Manu Sayambhuva, has been dated circa **200 BCE-400CE**. The oldest known commentators of this treatise (śāstra) - the learned '*Rishis*', **Bhārucci** and **Mēdhātithi** have been dated around 600-650 CE and 820-1050 CE. Here, we might take a pause to indicate that the *Vedic assura, Mēdhā* was the Vedic equivalent of the *Gathic ahura, Mazdā*. Among the Vedic peoples a major part of the textual tradition forms the **Indic Law** - a branch of learning of religious, moral, ethical, social and legal duty .....etc. The text (according to records) presents itself as a discourse given by **Manu**, the [progenitor of mankind](#), to a group of [rishis](#) (seers), who beseech him to relate and explain to them the "law of all the social classes". Manu, then, became the standard point of reference for all future Vedic Dharmaśāstras, which followed it.

*Code of Manu 1.2: "Consent, O thou divine one, to declare to us precisely and in due order the sacred laws of each of the four chief castes (varna) and of the intermediate ones."*

In English literature it gives the definition of the word '*Ārya / Ārya(n) / Āryan*' (also spelt '*Ārian*' [after Strabo, a Greek traveler/explorer (66 BCE-24 CE) spelt the land, '*Ariana*' in Greek. See my article [The Domain of Zarathushtra - Part I & II](#) in Avesta – Zoroastrian Archives [www.avesta.org](http://www.avesta.org) with maps] thus: -

*"he alone is an Ārya(n) who adheres to the 'Code of Conduct' ('The Code of Manu') and does not deviate there-from." It is, therefore, merit alone, which is the test of a person's worth, not his mere descent. The word 'Ārya(n)' is, therefore, more a symbol of the thought, the spirit and the 'mores' of a distant people, rather than connotative of any racial or ethnic background. There has never been an attempt here at all, not even a vague one, of exhibiting vain attitudes of superiority of race or blood or one of a self-exalted group of superior beings, in special favour with the Creator. The original word in the hymns of the Vedas the word 'Ārya' occurs frequently as a national name and as a name of honour. It meant 'of a good family', 'of noble birth', 'lord' comprising of those who venerated the divinity of the 'Brāhmins' as opposed to the opposition composed of the 'Dasyus'.*

*The later meaning in the dogmatic Sanskrit literature, the 'Ārya' became synonymous with the first three castes - the Brāhmins, Kshatriyas & Vaisyas.*

*In the Satapatha Brāhmana it states distinctly that the 'Āryas are only the Brāhmins, Kshatriyas & Vaisyas'.*

*In the Athārvā Veda the connotation is further extended as "seeing all things equal whether Sudras or Ārya "*

*Athārvā Veda iv, 20.4: 'The Creator, who possesses the power of a thousand eyes, hath placed keen-ness of perception in my right hand, whether I look alike on a sudra or an Ārya.'*



The word '**Hindu-sthan/Hindustan**' refers to the '**Abode of the Hindus**'. Yet the word, '**Hindu**' does not at all occur anywhere in their Holy Scriptures, the Vedas or in any later commentaries/ spiritual texts. Clearly, it is of Āiryānic / Iranian origin as follows: -

**Vānidād 1.19: states "The 15<sup>th</sup> best land, I, Ahura Mazda created was Haptā Hindavā [the Saptā Sindhavā/ Saptā Sindhu - the land of the seven rivers of the Vedas]"**

(Linguistically, the Vedic alphabet 'S' is the Avestan 'H'.  
Consequently, Vedic word, Sindhu becomes the Avestan word, Hindu)

**These seven Vedic Rivers were:-**

1. **The Upper Sindhu itself - the Indus of the Greeks.**

2. **Kubha - the lower part of the main stem of the Sindhu - the present Jhēlum.**

3. **Asikni - the present Chēnāb.**

4. **Parusni - the present Ravi.**

5. **Vipās - the present Beās.**

6. **Sutudra - the present Sutlej and, finally.**

7. **Sarasvati** - the equivalent Avestan word was also of the south-eastern part of the present Afghanistan - **Haraqvaiti**, the 13<sup>th</sup> best land created by Ahura Mazda. The eastern-most **Sarasvati River** has been documented in remote history as having slowly dried in the extreme heat of Rajasthan into a tiny stream and ultimately stop flowing altogether. But, being a Holy River held in high spiritual esteem, its memory had to be retained.

Legend has it that it was deemed to have gone underground and emerge as the **Godavari River** in the region of the present State of Maharashtra and Nashik City, where Ram, Lakshman and retinue had rested for a while before proceeding further to Lanka (Ceylon/Shree Lanka) to rescue Sita, who had been abducted and held captive by Rāvan.

To this day, in their honour, a grand festival is held every 4 years in the dry bed of the Godāvāri River before the deluge of the monsoon months except during the 12<sup>th</sup> year, when the sacred Kumbh Mēlā is held in the north. I possess many happy childhood memories of these festive occasions in the bed of the Godāvāri River at Nashik.

This 'S' and 'H' linguistic interchange between the Vedic and Avestan languages was not the only reason. To add to it, the Greeks, being reluctant to pronounce 'h', called the **Sindhu/Hindu River**, the **Indus**. The British, after occupation, followed suit and called the whole subcontinent **India, instead of Hindia**, the land of the **Hindus**. They, then, went further to call the entire area, the **Punjāb (Punch-Āb means 5 waters)**, the land of the 5 rivers. The citizens of India however continued to call their birth-land, **Hindu-stan**

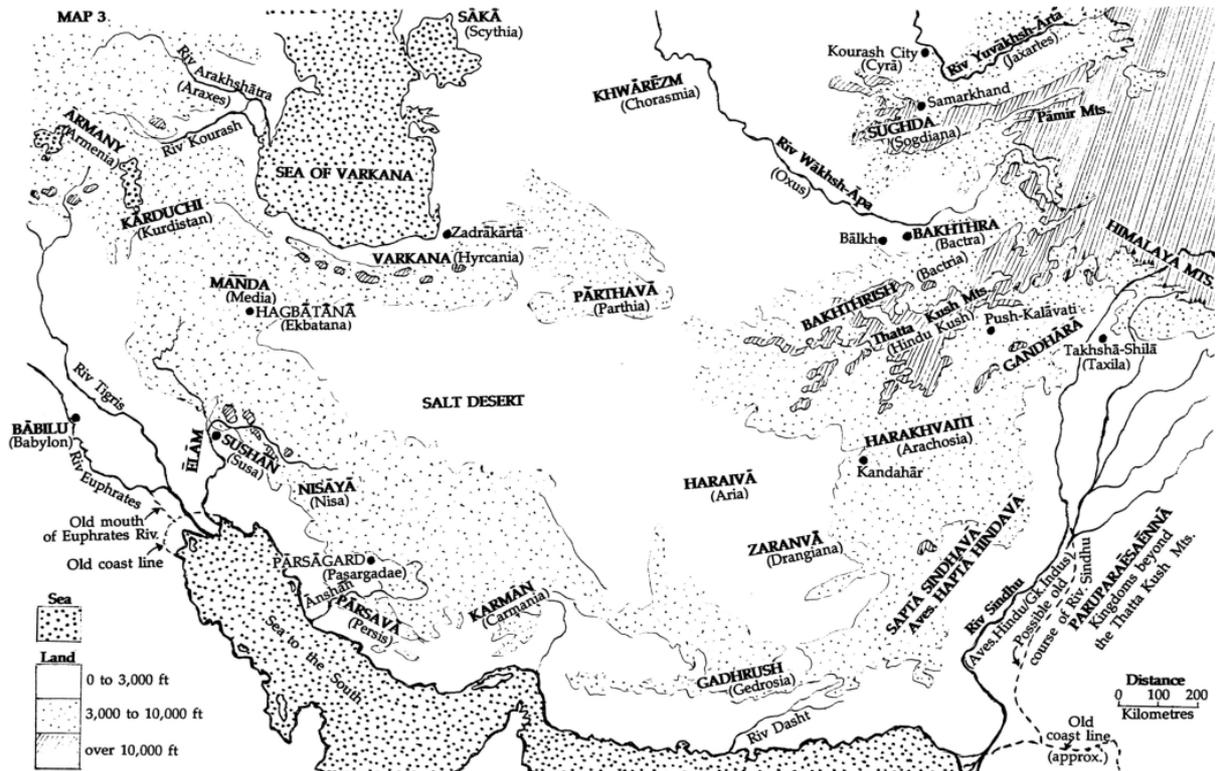


Figure 2. The Vedic River Sindhu and the Land of Seven Rivers – Saptā Sindhavā

Even the Greeks respected the fact that the land they had won from King Purush-Uttam, (meaning Superior Man. Greek word - Porus) was, indeed, a land of seven rivers.

The Greek-named seven rivers were: -

1. The Upper part of the main stem - the present *Indus* itself continuing as the Kophen:-
2. *Kophen* – the lower part of the main stem.
3. *Hydaspes* - the present *Jhēlum*
4. *Akesinis* - the present *Chēnāb*
5. *Hyarotis* - the present *Ravi*.
6. *Hyphasis* - the present *Beās*.
7. *Saranges* - the present *Sutlēj*. It would appear that the Saravati River had long been forgotten at the time of Alexander.

Unlike the spiritual Śrutis of the Vedas, the Code of Manu literally prescribes authoritatively the code of conduct to be followed in daily life - the duties of persons during their various stages in life as students, workers, house-holders, retirees and even ascetics; explains dietary regulations; describes offences and recompenses in details; regulates the rights and duties of rulers; discusses purification and funerary rites & forms of hospitality and types of daily oblations; and, finally delves on judicial matters.

The epic poem '*Mahābhārata*', which includes especially the Itihāsas, Rāmāyana, the Bhāgavad Gita, Purānās and other Dharmasāstras, except the earliest portions of the Mahāabhārata - the Manu Smṛti predates the rest of the Mahābhārata. It mentions Manu as having been born of great wisdom and devoted virtue and acclaims him as the progenitor of a line. Following on Manu's conduct have been born all human beings, who have, therefore, been called Manavas. And, it is of Manu that all men including Brāhmanas, Kshatriyas, and others have been descended, and are, therefore, all called Manavas. The Brāhmanas

remained devoted to the study of the Vedas.

‘*Ārya*’ is a Sanskrit word and ‘*Āirya*’ an Avestan word/pronunciation. The common Indo-Iranian name has persisted to this very day both among the descendants of the Indic Āryās and among the Iranian Āiryānic peoples. Even after the schism and separation into two separate beliefs in their common Primeval Abode - the Indic ‘*Ārya Avarta*’ and the Iranian ‘*Āiryanā Vaēja*’ (the seeds of *Āiryānā*), the Avestan interpretation of the ‘*Code*’ has been maintained as *Manuschithra* (Pāh/Modern Persian: *Manuchēhr*; Guj: *Minōchēhēr*, *Minoo* meaning “of the origin of/ the source of/ the creed of/ the seed of Manu”). Following the march from their Subarctic abode, ‘*Āiryanā Vaēja*’, southwards and westwards and subsequent conquests, the memory of ‘*Āiryanā*’ > ‘*Āiryana*’ > ‘*Āirān*’ has been retained over the millennia (see *Āirān* on the Sassānian coins in the website ‘Avesta - Zoroastrian Archives’: Kerr, Sam: [Sassanian Dynasty -- Historical Perspective](#) ). At what stage after the loss of the last Zoroastrian Dynasty - Sassānian Āirān in 641 CE in the last battle of Nihāvand to the Arabs was the name, ‘*Āirān*’ converted to ‘*Irān*’ is not clear.

The Holy Bible mentions ‘*Adam*’ as being the first created human. The name was derived from the word ‘*Ādam*’, which means ‘*I am*’ in the Aramaic language. It is indeed humbling to read what the Catholic Encyclopaedia has to say “.....the ethical teachings of the ‘*Laws of Manu*’ is very high, embracing all forms of moral obligation recognised in the Christian Religion.”

### **The Avestan Āiryas:**

In the Holy Avesta as well as in the rock inscriptions the etymological emphasis is that the honourable title signifies ‘*Āirya*’ as - : ‘The venerable noble believer of celestial origin and the worshipper of Ahura Mazda’.

*In Mehr Yasht §.—the whole Āiryan expanse is called ‘vispām āiryō-śayanəm’.*  
*The Āiryan provinces were ‘āiryanām dakhyunām & ‘āiryāō dainghāvō’ as opposed to the occupied territories and other lands which were called ‘an- āiryāō dainghāvō’.*

The title of honour is further shown in trilingual rock inscriptions at Behistun (also called Bisetun) near Shiraz of the Achaemenian Darius I 521-486 BCE and in the Naqš ē Rostam rock inscriptions of the Sassanian King Shapur II 309-379 CE. They call themselves ‘*Āirya*’ and ‘*Āirya-chithra*’ - of Aryan origin and descent. The name of the grandfather of Darius I was *Ārya-Rāmanō* 640-615 BCE (Gk: Ariaramanes)

### **Tomb Inscription**

*I am Darius the Great King, King of Kings, King of the Provinces  
containing all kinds of men, King in this great earth far and wide,  
son of Hystāspes, an Achaemenian, a Persian, son of a Persian,  
an Aryan, having Aryan lineage.*



Figure 3. Part of Naqš e Rustom Tombs and Rock Inscriptions Achaemenian & Sassanian Kings at Behistun showing tomb of Darius I (the Great) .

Let us now examine the Holy Avesta for further clarification of the Āiryānic Primeval Homeland:

*Āiryavnəm-vaejo:*

*Vend 1.3: “The first and the best settled land I, Ahura Mazda created was Airyana vaeja.....”*

*Āiryānic expanse:*

*Āvā(n) Yasht 5.42: Zarathushtra beseeches Yazata Āvā(n) asking for a boon, “.....that I may acquire this glory, which..... is of the people of Āiryānām dakhyunām (the Āiryānic expanse).....”.*

*Āiryene-vaejahi:*

*Vend 2.21: ‘...Yima the ruler, the most excellent man in Airyana vaeja summoned a meeting and meting the face to face with the Creator, Ahura Mazda.....’*

*Hormazd Yasht 1.21: Homage be to the Kēyānian glory unto the land of Āiryāna vaeje..... homage be unto the entire Creation of Ahura Mazda.*

*Āvān Yasht 5.17: ‘.....whosoever has praised the Creator, Ahura Mazda in the primal homeland of Airyana vaeja.....is one who is pure and possesses wisdom of the tongue, mind and deeds.....’*

*Rām Yasht 15.2: The beneficent atmosphere - ‘He praised the Creator, Ahura Mazda and the virtuous, lawful lineage of Airyna vaeja.....’*

**Āiryāō:**

*Tir Yasht 8.9: The glittering light of Tishtriya (the bestower of rain) renders immense happiness to hundreds of inhabitants when it pervades the fertile lands of the Airyas to make the Aryan expanse fertile.*

*Tir Yasht 8.56: "O Spitama Zarathushtra of the Airyan expanse bestow vigour to the glittering light of Tistriya.....drive away ill-will, deceit, pestilence & menacing chariots with uplifted banner of invasion.*

**Āiryō:**

*Tir Yasht 8.6: The swiftest archer, Ērēksha shot an arrow from Mount Khshutta to Mount Khawant.....to indicate the boundary of Āiryana with Turān.*

**Airē:**

**Āvā(n) Yasht 5.69:**

*.....Beseeches Aredvi Sura Anahita: "Grant me the boon that I may succeed as much as the other citizens of Āiryana."*

**Airyabyō:**

**Tir Yasht 8.61:**

*"Whenever misfortunes occur in Āiryana by thousands and myriads of evil-thinking nations they will all be overcome."*

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- Sam Kerr  
Sydney, Australia  
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