Zoroastrianism in Other Faiths

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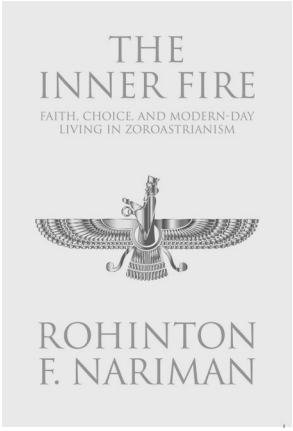
By the same author:



THE INNER FIRE

FAITH, CHOICE, AND MODERN-DAY LIVING IN ZOROASTRIANISM

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IN OTHER FAITHS

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Published by
Rohinton F. Nariman 2021

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Printed and bound at
Repro Knowledgecast Limited, India

This book is dedicated to the memory of
my beloved mother Bapsi,
who died on 9th June 2020.

Contents

Preface

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune have consigned Zoroastrianism, which was the religion of three great Persian empires, namely, the Achaemenid Empire, the Parthian Empire and the Sasanian Empire—spanning over a thousand years, to a few hundred thousand people scattered all over the globe. The Achaemenid Empire is said to have begun with Cyrus-II, also known as Cyrus the Great, in 550 BC and lasted for 200 odd years until its last ruler, Darius-III, was ousted in battle by Alexander the Great, king of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedonia of the Argead dynasty, in 330 BC. While the Parthian Empire, again spanned about 450 years beginning from 247 BC to about 224 AD, the Sasanian Empire also spanned about 425 years, beginning from 224 AD and ending in 651 AD with the death of the last Sasanian king, Yazdegerd-III. Each of these empires spread beyond Persia itself—to the north, up to the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea; to the west up to the Mediterranean Sea; to the south up to the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula of Western Asia; and to the east up to the Indus River.

The most remarkable aspect about these empires is that the religion of Zarathustra—a monotheistic one which abjures idol worship—was not forcibly spread throughout the empire's dominions. It is perhaps for this reason that the

Achaemenid Empire had a great influence on Judaism, the monotheistic religion developed among the ancient Hebrews, which I discuss later in this book, and the Parthian Empire had a great influence on Roman religion by the spread of an important Zoroastrian angel, Mithra. The Sasanian Empire, whose rulers were Zoroastrian, also allowed prophets like Mani to preach a new faith which comprised a synthesis of Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Buddhism, and Mazdak, the first Bolshevik, to preach a new faith based on communism. I also discuss the spread of what is called Western Mithraism among the Roman soldiery and its rivalry with, and influence upon, Christianity.

The impetus for this book has come from a lecture titled, 'Through the Looking Glass—Zoroastrianism in Other Faiths', which I delivered at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai on the invitation of the then trustees. The subject matter of the lecture was the influence of Zoroastrianism on other world religions.

The purpose of this book is to bring to the readers' notice the influence of the old faith of Zoroastrianism, as reflected and practised in other world religions, which has been largely forgotten by the Western civilization, thanks to its emphasis on the civilizations of Greece and Rome. It is because the Persians were unable to rule over the Greeks as they ruled over several other Asiatic peoples, and because of their defeat at the hands of the Greeks in the famous battles of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis, together with the decimation of their first Empire by Alexander the Great, that the religion of these three empires and its influence over other faiths has largely been forgotten. It is my endeavour to inform the reader what I consider to be the elements of Zoroastrianism as reflected and practised in other world religions.

Chapter I

The Rigveda and Zarathustra's Reform

To begin at the beginning, the Zoroastrian religion harkens back to one founder prophet, namely Zarathustra. In this, it is wholly unlike the Judaic religion which, though beginning with Abraham, continued to have a series of prophets who communicated with Yahweh to constantly instruct the Jewish people of their duties to Yahweh and to each other.

Zarathustra is a fire priest in the old Rigvedic religion, which comprises primarily nature divinities, as he has been described as 'Zotar' in the Gathas which is equivalent to 'Hotar' (agnihotri). This is clear from the word Zotar used by Zarathustra to describe himself in the Gathas, which is the equivalent of an Agnihotri or a fire priest. The Rigveda itself originates from the steppes in Central Asia, until its final book, namely Mandala 10, which is said to be composed in the plains of the Punjab. It belongs to what is called Sruti literature, since it was remembered for thousands of years before it was finally written down in the Brahmi script in the fourth to sixth century AD.

The 10 Mandalas or books consist of 1017 chapters, which in turn comprise thousands of hymns. Each of these

was composed by families of ancient rishis (saints), most notable among them being the families of sages Angiras, Brighu, Vasishta, Vishvamitra, Kashyapa and Agastya. The oldest Mandalas, namely Mandalas 2 to 7, themselves span over a thousand years, beginning from 1800 BC and carrying on into the first century AD.

Zarathustra steps out of the Rigveda as a prophet of one Creator-God, who is called Ahura Mazda—the appellation 'Ahura' being equal to 'Asura', an appellation that applied in the Rigveda to the gods of ethics, namely Mithra and Varuna, and 'Mazda' being a newly coined expression meaning 'the Great Creator'. Zarathustra says that he is the first to have been appointed to be the vicar of this God on earth,[1] to spread his message, which he receives through Vohu Manah, literally the 'good mind', being a revelation from almighty God himself.

In order to appreciate what may be called the Zoroastrian Reform, it is necessary to refer to some of the interesting creation hymns of the Rigveda. Most of these are to be found in the tenth or the last Mandala. Thus, in Mandala 10, Agni, or the God of fire, is placed on a pedestal and as many as 339 gods honour him (see Hymns LII and LIII). Dyaus Pitar, called the infinite, is then extolled in Hymns LXIII and LXVII.[2]

Hymn LXXII speaks of Brahmanaspati, who is likened to a smith with bellows blowing life into creatures. This hymn is

1. *See* Yasna Ha 44.11, Ushtavaiti Gatha.
2. Incidentally, Dyaus Pitar becomes the King of the Gods in the Greek Pantheon, known as Zeus, and becomes the King of the Gods in the Roman Pantheon, this time being called Jupiter.

of great interest, in that it speaks also of two great goddesses, Daksha and Aditi, each being born from the other—Aditi producing the seven Adityas or solar deities, and Martanda or a dead egg, who is slated to become man. This hymn is set out as follows:

Hymn LXXII

1. LET US with tuneful skill proclaim these generations of the Gods,
   That one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a future age.

2. These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like a Smith,
   Existence, in an earlier age of Gods, from Non-existence sprang.

3. Existence, in the earliest age of Gods, from Non-existence sprang.
   Thereafter were the regions born. This sprang from the Productive Power.

4. Earth sprang from the Productive Power the regions from the earth were born.
   Daksa was born of Aditi, and Aditi was Daksa's Child.

5. For Aditi, O Daksa, she who is thy Daughter, was brought forth.
   After her were the blessed Gods born sharers of immortal life.

6. When ye, O Gods, in yonder deep close clasping one another stood,
   Thence, as of dancers, from your feet a thickening cloud of dust arose.

7. When, O ye Gods, like Yatis, ye caused all existing things to grow,
   Then ye brought Sūrya forward who was lying hidden in the sea.

8. Eight are the Sons of Aditi who from her body sprang to life.
   With seven she went to meet the Gods she cast Martanda far away.

9. So, with her Seven Sons Aditi went forth to meet the earlier age.
   She brought Martanda thitherward to spring to life and die again.

— (Mandala 10, Hymn LXXII)

In Hymns LXXXI and LXXXII, the concept of Visvakarman is then mooted, who like an architect fashions the heavens and the earth, as follows:

Hymn LXXXI

1. HE who sat down as Hotar-priest, the Rsi, our Father, offering up all things existing,
   He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal.

2. What was the place whereon he took his station? What was it that supported him? How was it?
   Whence Visvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.

3. He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides,
   He, the Sole God, producing earth and heaven, weldeth them, with his arms as wings, together.

4. What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven?
   Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things.

5. Nine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures, and these thy mid-most here, O Visvakarman,
   Teach thou thy friends at sacrifice, O Blessed, and come thyself, exalted, to our worship.

6. Bring thou thyself, exalted with oblation, O Visvakarman, Earth and Heaven to worship.
   Let other men around us live in folly here let us have a rich and liberal patron.

7. Let us invoke to-day, to aid our labour, the Lord of Speech, the thought-swift Visvakarman.
   May he hear kindly all our invocations who gives all bliss for aid, whose works are righteous.

Hymn LXXXII

1. THE Father of the eye, the Wise in spirit, created both these worlds submerged in fatness.
   Then when the eastern ends were firmly fastened, the heavens and the earth were far extended.

2. Mighty in mind and power is Visvakarman, Maker, Disposer, and most lofty Presence.
   Their offerings joy in rich juice where they value One, only One, beyond the Seven Rsis.

3. Father who made us, he who, as Disposer, knoweth all races and all things existing,
   Even he alone, the Deities' name-giver, him other beings seek for information.

4. To him in sacrifice they offered treasures—Rsis of old, in numerous troops, as singers,
   Who, in the distant, near, and lower region, made ready all these things that have existence?

5. That which is earlier than this earth and heaven, before the Asuras and Gods had being,
   What was the germ primeval which the waters received where all the Gods were seen together?

6. The waters, they received that germ primeval wherein the Gods were gathered all together.
   It rested set upon the Unborn's navel, that One wherein abide all things existing.

7. Ye will not find him who produced these creatures: another thing hath risen up among you.
   Enwrapt in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented.

We then come to the famous Purusha Sukta or Hymn XC, which deals with the theory of the entire cosmos being one cosmic man who has a thousand heads, eyes and feet, three-fourth of whom is in heaven and one-fourth on earth, and through whom the four Varnas which dominate Hinduism emerge. This great creation Hymn states as follows:

1. A THOUSAND heads hath Purusa, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.
   On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.

2. This Purusa is all that yet hath been and all that is to be;
   The Lord of Immortality which waxes greater still by food.

3. So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusa.
   All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths eternal life in heaven.

4. With three-fourths Purusa went up: one-fourth of him again was here.
   Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.

5. From him Virāj was born; again Purusa from Virāj was born.
   As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o'er the earth.

6. When Gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusa as their offering,
   Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn; summer was the wood.

7. They balmed as victim on the grass Purusa born in earliest time.
   With him the Deities and all Sādhyas and Rsis sacrificed.

8. From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat was gathered up.
   He formed the creatures of-the air, and animals both wild and tame.

9. From that great general sacrifice Rcas [hymns] and Sāma-hymns were born:
   Therefrom were spells and charms produced; the Yajus had its birth from it.

10. From it were horses born, from it all cattle with two rows of teeth:
    From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.

11. When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make?
    What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

12. The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rājanya made.
    His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced.

13. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth;
    Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vāyu from his breath.

14. Forth from his navel came mid-air the sky was fashioned from his head
    Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus, they formed the worlds.

15. Seven fencing-sticks had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared,
    When the Gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as their victim, Purusa.

16. Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim these were the earliest holy ordinances.
    The Mighty Ones attained the height of heaven, there where the Sādhyas, Gods of old, are dwelling.

— (Mandala 10, Hymn XC)

Another remarkable creation Hymn CXXI deals with the cosmic egg called Hiranyagarbha and Prajapati, the Lord of the Creatures, as follows:

1. IN the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha, born Only Lord of all created beings.
   He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

2. Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, he whose commandments all the Gods acknowledge -.
   The Lord of death, whose shade is life immortal. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

3. Who by his grandeur hath become Sole Ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers;
   He who is Lord of men and Lord of cattle. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

4. His, through his might, are these snow-covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasā his possession:
   His arms are these, his are these heavenly regions. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

5. By him the heavens are strong and earth is stedfast, by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported:
   By him the regions in mid-air were measured. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

6. To him, supported by his help, two armies embattled look while trembling in their spirit,
   When over them the risen Sun is shining. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

7. What time the mighty waters came, containing the universal germ, producing Agni,
   Thence sprang the Gods' one spirit into being. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

8. He in his might surveyed the floods containing productive force and generating Worship.
   He is the God of gods, and none beside him. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

9. Ne'er may he harm us who is earth's Begetter, nor he whose laws are sure, the heavens' Creator,
   He who brought forth the great and lucid waters. What God shall we adore with our oblation?

10. Prajāpati! thou only comprehendest all these created things, and none beside thee.
    Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke thee: may we have store of riches in possession.

— (Mandala 10, Hymn CXXI)

And finally comes the enigmatic creation Hymn in Chapter CXXIX which can then speak for itself:

1. THEN was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.
   What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?

2. Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.
   That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

3. Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos.
   All that existed then was void and form less: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.

4. Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.

Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

5. Transversely was their severing line extended: what was above it then, and what below it?
   There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder

6. Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation?
   The Gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being?

7. He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,
   Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

— (Mandala 10, Hymn CXXIX)

Each of the speculations in these creation hymns is man at his spiritual best, that is man reaching out into his subconscious in a majestic attempt to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Zarathustra emerges out of this ancient nature religion with its cosmic speculations to state, in unmistakable terms, in the 238 hymns that have come to be known to us as the Gathas, that there is one Creator-God who alone is to be worshipped. His revelation to Zarathustra is that life on earth must proceed along the path of truth, which is the holy triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, together with the fighting of evil as every human being individually perceives it.

In two significant chapters of the Gathas, Zarathustra's message is that when God first created two spirits, that is, twin spirits alike in every respect, he gave them the power

of choice. One choice is good and the other choice, its diametric opposite, evil. The whole object of man, therefore, is to attempt to be like the good spirit and do as much good as possible, together with fighting the good fight, i.e. fighting against evil. It is when man triumphs in this that he goes, at death, to a heaven that is called the 'Abode of Song'.

Incidentally, in the Rigveda, Hymn CXXXV in Mandala 10, speaks of Yama's abode as being the abode of song, reflecting a Zoroastrian heaven, as follows:

1. IN the Tree clothed with goodly leaves where Yama drinketh with the Gods,
   The Father, Master of the house, tendeth with love our ancient Sires.

2. I looked reluctantly on him who cherishes those men of old,
   On him who treads that evil path, and then I yearned for this again.

3. Thou mountest, though thou dost not see, O Child, the new and wheel-less car
   Which thou hast fashioned mentally, onepoled but turning every way.

4. The car which thou hast made to roll hitherward from the Sages, Child!
   This hath the Sāman followed close, hence, laid together on a ship.

5. Who was the father of the child? Who made the chariot roll away?
   Who will this day declare to us how the funeral gift was made?

6. When the funeral gift was placed, straightway the point of flame appeared.
   A depth extended in the front: a passage out was made behind.

7. Here is the seat where Yama dwells, that which is called the Home of Gods:
   Here minstrels blow the flute for him here he is glorified with songs.

— (Mandala 10, Hymn CXXXV)

It is when man fails to emulate his higher self that he is then consigned to what is called 'Drujo Deman', the domain of the lie, which is the domain of unreal existence in which he is to correct himself so as to be fit for the two gifts that God promises to every human being, namely Haurvatat and Ameretat, which is wholeness or perfection and immortality in a life that will last forever and in which death plays no part. And this is achieved through the medium of one cut-off date or Judgment Day, after which all souls will be able to live in peace and harmony together with each other, in the companionship of their creator, Ahura Mazda.

It is this conception, particularly the path of truth, that permeates Zoroastrianism throughout, notwithstanding the creeping back of all the old Rigvedic deities thrown over by Zarathustra—this time not as gods in their own right, but as lesser beings, that is angels or Yazatas.

It is with this beginning that we have to see how the Zoroastrian reform, so to speak, entered the three great Persian dynasties, and how ultimately, they influenced the course of events in some of the great Semitic faiths.

Chapter II

Zoroastrianism and Judaism

The towering figure that arises on the scene—this time, not from Persian texts, but from the Old Testament—is the figure of Cyrus the Great. Being one of the rulers of the Achaemenid dynasty, he is said to be the founder of a great Persian Empire. It is this great personage who burst upon the scene in Babylon in 539 BC, where the Jews had been in captivity and who, after defeating Babylon in battle, freed the Jews from their captivity and promised not only that he would return the artefacts from the First Temple that had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, but also that he would rebuild the temple constructed by King Solomon in Jerusalem with Persian funds. For this, it is important at this stage, to refer to several books of the Old Testament which speak of these events.

The Old Testament comprises 39 books, beginning with the five books of Moses and ending with the Book of Malachi, which span over 1500 years. We begin with the Second Book of Chronicles, in which the proclamation of King Cyrus is referred to as follows:

The Proclamation of Cyrus

22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

— (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

This is continued in the Book of Ezra, which is the fifteenth book of the Old Testament. The chief figure of this book is the priest, Ezra, who is one of the most important figures in Jewish history after the return of a group of Jews to Jerusalem from the Babylonian exile. He is credited with a new emphasis upon adherence to the law and is therefore called the father of modern Judaism. A part of this book deals with the drastic reform of forcing Jews who had married foreign women, to divorce them. In the first chapter of this book, he refers to the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, being stirred by the Lord, and the consequent return of the exiles to Jerusalem as follows:

The Proclamation of Cyrus

1. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made

a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying:

2. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.
3. Who is there among you of all his people ? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.
4. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourn-eth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

The Return of the Exiles to Jerusalem

5. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem.
6. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.
7. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnez'zar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8. even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mith'redath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbaz'zar, the prince of Judah.
9. And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,
10. thirty basins of gold, silver basins of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.
11. All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbaz'zar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

— (I Ezra 1:1-10)

In Chapter 3, Ezra tells us how he and other leaders of a group of Jews set up an altar and laid the foundation for the New Temple whose reconstruction was hindered by adversaries—presumably samaritans living in a territory formerly occupied by Israel. After some controversy, the then King of Persia ordered the work to be stopped (*see* Chapter 4). Then rose Zerubbabel and Joshua (priests), who resumed work on the temple during the reign of Darius, King of Persia. What is interesting is that King Darius was approached by the Jews, stating that King Cyrus had promised them that he would rebuild their temple with funds from the Persian treasury. However, King Cyrus had died, as also his son, Cambyses. Darius, who made a search for the decree of Cyrus, ultimately found it and stated that the work on the New Temple must be done with all speed. Chapter 6 of the Book of Ezra is worth quoting as follows:

Then Dari'us the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2 And there was found at Ach'metha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: 3 In the first year of Cyrus the king, the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height there-of threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4 with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: 5 and also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnez'zar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God. 6 Now therefore, Tat'nai, governor beyond the river, She'thar-boz'nai, and your companions the Aphar'sachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 7 let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. 8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. 9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: 10 that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of

> his sons. 11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. 12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Dari'us have made a decree; let it be done with speed.
>
> — (I Ezra 6:1-12)

What is interesting to note is that the Temple was finished on the third day of Adar—the ninth month in the Zoroastrian calendar—in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the King.

Ezra was authorised by King Artaxerxes, in whose reign he lived, to return to Jerusalem with Jews who wished to accompany him and be free to teach and enforce the Mosaic law.

The sixteenth book of the Bible, the Book of Nehemiah, continues this history. Nehemiah appears to be a political leader who is credited with the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem at the time of King Artaxerxes. Nehemiah then speaks of Ezra reading the Mosaic law to the people (*see* Chapter 8). In a beautiful passage in Chapter 9, he speaks of almighty God as follows:

> 6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven. Worshipped thee. 7 Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; 8 and foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and

> the Per'izzites, and the Jeb'usites, and the Gir'gashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast per-formed thy words; for thou art righteous.
>
> — (Nehemiah 9:6-8)

Thanks to Nehemiah, it was decided that the rulers and every tenth man chosen by lot would dwell in Jerusalem, and the rest in the other cities. Mixed marriages were proscribed, reminding people that such alliances had caused even Solomon to sin (it will be remembered that Solomon was the son of King David, a Jew and his wife, Bathsheba, a Hittite).

The seventeenth book of the Bible, the Book of Esther, is the one book of the Old Testament that does not speak of Yahweh. Indeed, 'Esther' is not a Jewish name but a Persian one given to a Jewish lady called Hadassah.

The Book of Esther begins with King Ahasuerus, namely, King Xerxes of history, being defied by his wife, Queen Vashti. The great king was holding a feast in his capital, Susa, in one of his palaces. When he sent for his queen to show the people and the princes her beauty, she refused to come. The king, therefore, was 'very wroth and his anger burned in him'. His wisemen advised him that Queen Vashti should come no more before him. Several years later, the king decided to seek another queen.

A Jew named Mordecai, a descendant of the Babylonian exiles, brought to the king his own young king's woman named Hadassah. The king got to know her and loved her above all others. However, he did not know that she was a Jewess, for Mordecai had advised her to conceal her identity. Xerxes then set the royal crown upon her head and made her the queen instead of Queen Vashti. Shortly afterwards, Mordecai learned of a plot to kill the king and told Esther, who informed the king and saved him from death. At this

point in the story, Haman, an Amalekite (a traditional enemy of the Jews) enters. He was the king's favourite. Mordecai, a Jew who observed the Mosaic law, would not bow to Haman as court protocol required. For this reason, Haman urged King Xerxes to destroy all the Jews for the reason that they had strange laws of their own and would not obey the king's laws. The king agreed, and the order went out to punish the Jews. Mordecai informed Queen Esther about this, beseeching her to intercede with the king, who listened to the queen's plea at a banquet to which he had invited both Mordecai and Haman. Revealing how Haman had misled him, King Xerxes then ordered Haman to be hanged on the very gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordecai.

Queen Esther had very skilfully spoken of the Jews as a law-abiding people, and also reminded the king as to how Mordecai had saved the king's life on a previous occasion. Mordecai, therefore, was laden with honours, but as the laws of the Medes and the Persians were unalterable, the king permitted the Jews not only to defend themselves, but also to take vengeance upon those who came to destroy them. Accordingly, on the thirteenth day of the ninth month, i.e. the month of Adar in the Zoroastrian calendar, the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes and smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword and 'slaughtered unto destruction and did what they did unto those that hated them'. To commemorate this day, Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews that were in all the provinces of King Xerxes to keep the fourteenth and the fifteenth day of the month of Adar, every year, as days of remembrance—they are to make them days of feasting and joy and of sending portions of food, one to the other, and gifts to the poor. These days of feasting and joy were thereafter called Purim which is celebrated till date in Israel

as one of the greatest feasts to commemorate the victory of the Jews over their enemies.

An interesting article by R. P. Karkaria titled, 'Purim and Farwardigan', speaks of the importance of the feast of Purim. One of the great Jewish philosophers who lived in Spain, Moses Maimonides, is supposed to have stated, 'in the days of Messiah, the prophetic books and the Hagiographa will be done away with, excepting only Esther, which will endure together with the Pentateuch.' The Jews have always venerated this book and they call it with an honourable distinctive epithet, the 'Megillah'. It is read every year to the present day in the synagogues at the feast of Purim.

The learned author then states that the festival of Farwardigan was celebrated following Aban—the eighth month of the Parsian year—and if one works back to the time of King Xerxes, it would, according to the learned author, have been a spring festival. This festival in honour of the dead lasted ten days. However, it is a matter of history that in the days of yore, it lasted for only five days, being the intercalary days or the Gatha days at the end of the year. Al-Biruni, a famous Arab writer, who lived between 971 and 1039 AD, has thrown great light on how this festival came to be extended to ten days from five days.

We have seen how the festival of Purim lasts only for two days—the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar. Farwardigan likewise, lasted for the last five days which were placed at the end of the last month of the Persian year. These days were full of joyous activities comprising feasting, sending portions of food, one to the other, and gifts to the poor, as was done during the feast of Purim. As mentioned earlier, both were spring festivals which fell in March and were separated only by a few days. The Persian new year festival of Nowruz, which immediately followed Farwardigan, was

famous for its pomp and magnificence. Here again, we see direct Persian influence on celebrating the feast of Purim, at the time of the Book of Esther.

We then come to the twenty-third book of the Bible, the Book of Isaiah. For the purpose of our narrative, we are not concerned with the first Isaiah who lived in Judah from around 730 to 700 BC. Chapters 1 to 39 of this book deal with the first Isaiah's teachings. However, we are vitally concerned with the second Isaiah or Deutero Isaiah, whose preachings are contained in Chapters 40 to 66 of this book. Chapter 40 begins with the famous words that have been put to music in Handel's Messiah:

> *The LORD's Comforting Words to Zion*
>
> Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins.
>
> 3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 and the glory of the LORD shaft be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.
>
> — (Isaiah 40:1-5)

Then, Deutero Isaiah speaks of King Cyrus who was raised by the Lord from the East as follows:

God's Assurance to Israel

1 Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment. 2 Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. 3 He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet. 4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.

— (Isaiah 41:1-4)

In a declaration of monotheism and Yahweh alone being God besides whom there is no other, Deutero Isaiah states as follows:

The LORD the Only God

6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. 7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

— (Isaiah 44:6-8)

The picture of God being the First and the Last reminds us of Yasna Ha 31:8, in which Zarathustra refers to Ahura Mazda as follows:

AHUNAVAITI —Yas. 31.8

May I think of You as first and last—the be all and end all of everything —always. As the father of the highest mind. May I behold You in my mind's eye as the true creator of truth and the lord over the actions of the living.

— (*See* Rohinton F. Nariman, *The Inner Fire*, page 155)

In a significant passage in Chapter 44, King Cyrus is now referred to by name, as follows:

24 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25 that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26 that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27 that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28 that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

— (Isaiah 44:24-28)

King Cyrus is now referred to as the 'Anointed of the Lord', an appellation given only to Jewish prophets.

The Commission to Cyrus

Thus saith the LORD to his anointed. to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him;

> and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; 2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: 3 and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. 4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. 5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; 6 that they may know from the rising of the sun; and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.
>
> — (Isaiah 45:1-7)

> 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.
>
> — (Isaiah 45:13)

The declaration of the strictly monotheistic version of God now given, is reiterated as follows:

> 8 Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 calling a ravenous

> bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.
>
> — (Isaiah 46:8-11)

Fire, which is basic to Zoroastrian worship, is then referred to as follows:

> 11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.
>
> — (Isaiah 50:11)

Then comes a passage, unmistakably Zoroastrian in context,[3] as follows:

> *The Right Observance of Fasts*
>
> Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. 2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight

3. Zoroastrian and Confucianism are the two world religions which do not believe in fasting. The Semitic faiths, on the other hand, strongly believe in fasting—the allusion to the doing of good in preference to fasting necessarily speaks of the influence of Zoroastrianism upon Deutero Isaiah. The Vendidad rationalises anti-fasting thus:

> 33. Then let people learn by heart this holy saying: 'No one who does not eat, has strength to do heavy works of holiness, strength to do works of husbandry, strength to beget children. By eating every material creature lives, by not eating it dies away'.
>
> — (Vendidad 3:33)

to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. 3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to lose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward. 9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10 and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: 11 and the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the

> foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.
>
> — (Isaiah 58:1-12)

The vision of a new heaven on a new earth post resurrection is again spoken of by Deutero Isaiah:

> *New Heavens and a New Earth*
>
> 17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.
>
> — (Isaiah 65:17-25)

The LORD's Judgments and Zion's Future Hope

66 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? 2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

3 He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. 4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. 6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies.

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. 14 And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

15 For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. 17 They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.

18 For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. 19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. 20 And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon

> swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.
>
> 22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. 24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."
>
> — (Isaiah 66:1-24)

Prior to King Cyrus freeing the Jews from Babylon, the Jews, like the Greeks before them, had very shadowy notions of the afterlife. Somewhat like Hades, Sheol is a place which is a pit where there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom. (*See* Ecclesiastes 9:10)

It is also spoken of as a colourless place, being a place of silence and forgetfulness. (*See* Psalm 88:12, 115:17)

It is only after Persia ruled over the Jews for 200 years in the Achaemenid period that Jews were divided into two separate groups—Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were those who took after Persian modes of worship, i.e. they no longer believed in Sheol, but they believed in an afterlife consisting of heaven, hell, a Judgment Day and a resurrection, like the Zoroastrians who ruled them. The Sadducees railed against this, stating that this was a departure from the faith taught to them by Moses, and would therefore not be acceptable.

When we come to the Book of Ezekiel, being the twenty-sixth book of the Old Testament, we come to a figure who prophesied, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. Ezekiel was carried into Babylonian exile with many other Jews. The Prophet's call is referred to in Chapter 2 of the Book and what the Prophet calls an abomination carried out by Jews in the city of Jerusalem, refers unmistakably to Jews emulating Zoroastrian worship as follows:

> 16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. 17 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. 18 Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.
>
> — (Ezekiel 8:16-18)

We then come to the Book of Daniel which is the twenty-seventh book of the Bible. It is in this Book that there are unmistakable Zoroastrian allusions. Angels are spoken of as the direct messengers of God, and there are clear references to a belief in life after death. The famous handwriting on the wall takes place in this Book when Belshazzar, the prince who is ruling in Babylon in Nabonidus' place, is told at a feast,

'*mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*,' meaning, you are weighed in the scales and found wanting. Belshazzar was slain and Darius the Mede took the kingdom. (This is an obvious misstatement– King Cyrus is referred to). Daniel, however, continues as one of the persons given a higher position under King Darius.

Then comes the story of Daniel in the lion's den, which was taught to me as a young child in the scripture class taken by our Principal in the Cathedral & John Connon School, Bombay. This is worth setting out in some detail:

> 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Dari'us, live forever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Dari'us signed the writing and the decree.
>
> 10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to

the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was

> the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. 24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.
>
> 25 Then king Dari'us wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.
>
> 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Dari'us, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.
>
> — (Daniel 6:6-28)

Daniel then gets the famous vision of the four beasts as references to a conflict between the Greek and Persian empires and the oppression of the Jews under Antiochus-IV. Interestingly, after Judgment Day, Daniel's vision is as follows:

> *The Time of the End*
>
> And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people:

> and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.
>
> — (Daniel 12:1-4)

Zechariah, that is the thirtieth book of the Bible, is again relevant for our purpose. In Chapter 1, we are told that in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius' reign, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, saying that their fathers have not been penitent, and would, therefore, 'receive judgment'. Interestingly, Satan is spoken of in Chapter 3. In a passage reminiscent of Deutero Isaiah, insincere fasting is railed against as follows:

> *Insincere Fasting Reproved*
>
> And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Dari'us, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechari'ah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chis'leu; 2 when they had sent unto the house of God Shere'zer and Re'gem-me'lech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, 3 and to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? 4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, 5

> Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? 6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? 7 Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the South and the plain?
>
> — (Zechariah 7:1-7)

A number of books which have not made it to the Canon, namely, books in the Apocrypha, such as Esdras, Baruch, Enoch and Tobit, all referred to Zoroastrian Kings and Zoroastrian eschatology. They referred to heaven, hell, Judgment Day and devils. It must be remembered that the Jews did not believe in the Devil as an opposite to God, as later Zoroastrianism did. Satan appears in the Old Testament as an instrument of God, completely under God's control. Interestingly, Aeshma, which means wrath, and which is railed against in Zoroastrianism, is specifically referred to as 'Asmodeus' in Tobit and in 2 Kings—Chapters 17 and 30—as something to be abjured. A developed angelology is also found in these books, referring specifically to seven angels. The number seven is significant, in that Ahura Mazda or God has six archangels with him, by which we reach the number seven.

American scholarship has done a great deal to unravel what is contained in the books of the Old Testament that have been referred to above. In an interesting book titled, *Zoroastrianism and Judaism* by George William Carter, written in 1918, Carter examines the progress of

Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian studies that were made first in England by Thomas Hyde of Oxford in 1700, and later by the Frenchman Anquetil du Perron who came and lived in India among the priests of the Parsis. He states, in the introduction, that the Persians and the Jews were in contact with each other, one as ruler and the other as subject, for around 200 years, i.e. from 538 to 331 BC. He then delves into post-exilic Judaism, beginning with the closing years of Judah's existence and the accession of King Cyrus of Persia and the freeing of the Jews of Babylon as follows:

> During the closing years of Judah's existence, Jeremiah stood almost alone,[4] her last and greatest prophet. He declares the overthrow of the short rule of Egypt (609-605) by Nebuchadnezzar,[5] which was the beginning of the end for Judah. Earnest and pleading appeals for reform were of no avail.[6] The people were unrighteous and rebellious, and their doom foretold came upon them. "Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.[7]
>
> The few Jews who remained in Judah were in pitiable circumstances.[8] Not so were those in exile. For the most part their bondage was not an oppressive one.[9] Many lived in their own homes and some obtained wealth. But the true Israelites could never be reconciled to Babylon.[10] In exile they maintained their religion separately. This is

4. Jer. VII:8, VIII:8, II, XI:18-23.
5. Jer. XLVI.
6. Jer. XVII:5, 7, XIX, XX, XXXIV, XXXVIII.
7. Micah III:12.
8. Lam. III:45-53, V:1-18, Jer. XL:11-12.
9. Jer. XXIX:5-7, Isa. XLI:6-7, XLIV:10-20, Baruch VI.
10. Ezek. IV:12-15, Hos. IX:3, Psa. CXXXVII:1-5, Isa. XLII:22.

> undoubtedly the chief reason they did not dissolve and perish in captivity. The harm Babylonia had done in the years before the exile in exciting to idolatry, it undid in the years of banishment.
>
> With the accession of Cyrus and the rule of Persia, came the permission to return to their cherished land.[11] The undertaking was difficult. Years passed before those who returned succeeded in rebuilding the temple. It was not dedicated till 516 B.C.,[12] more than a hundred years after the reform of Josiah, and it was not till 445 B.C. that the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt.[13] Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Nehemiah were prominent figures in shaping the life of their community, especially Ezra and Nehemiah.
>
> — (pages 30-31)

References are then made to Kings Cyrus and Darius of Persia as follows:

> The Jews came into direct touch with Persia in the Babylonian exile and for more than two hundred years afterward. Cyrus, the Persian king, "the righteous one, the Shepherd of the Lord, the anointed of God,"[14] gave orders that the temple at Jerusalem be rebuilt and that the Jews be returned from captivity to their own city.[15] Darius, the worshipper of Ormazd, favored the rebuilding of the temple and commanded that the

11. Ezra VI:3-5, Ezra I:1-4.
12. Ezra III:8, Hag. II:3-9, Ezra VI:1-15, Zech. VIII:9-15.
13. Neh. II:7-8, VI:15-16.
14. Isa. XLI:2, XLIV:28, XLV:1-3,13.
15. II Chron. XXXVI:22-23, Ezra I:1-17, III:7, IV:3; I Esdras II:1-7.

> decree of Cyrus be carried into effect.[16] Judea became a Persian province and remained so till the time of Alexander. There are probably references to the ancient faith of Persia in Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah.[17]
>
> — (page 37)

Important points of agreement between Judaism and Zoroastrianism are then set out, after which the faith that had so much in common with Judaism in any case, was then favourably inclined to adopt various features of Zoroastrianism, given the tolerant manner in which they were ruled by the Persians. The learned author states:

> To bring Judaism and Zoroastrianism more clearly into view, the beliefs wherein they agree may be summarized briefly. Each was proclaimed by a prophet. Each worshipped one God. Each believed in an evil power. Each forbade images. Each laid emphasis on a moral act. Each was intolerant toward other systems. Each developed priestly cults, and emphasized ceremonial cleanness. Each had something like a synagogue worship. Belief in angels and demons and in the future life were ideas common to both.
>
> Surely with so many points of agreement here at once were influences that would tend to unify them. During all these years in which Judaism was gradually assuming form, the most intelligent and active members of the Jewish race were brought into continued contact with the dominant peoples of the age.[18] Since in other respects

16. Ezra VI:1-15, I Esdras III:42-57.
17. Ezek. VIII:16, Isa. XLV:7,12.
18. "Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren; seeking the good of his people." Esther X:3; also Esther VII:8, VIII:7-17, Dan. VI:1-3, 14, 28, VIII:3.

their habits were changed by the new environment, it would have been strange indeed if their religion had been unaffected. The Babylonians were too gross in their idolatry to develop Jewish religious conceptions. But the Jews were attracted by the faith that had so many articles in accord with their own teachings.

The policy of the Persians towards the Jews also would render the Jews favourably disposed towards their rulers.[19] There is evidence, too, that during the Persian period the Jewish community received many foreigners into its midst.[20] The influences which tended to keep the two religions apart were that the Hebrews were so little known, so little in contact with other peoples, and their priesthood so exclusive, that it is not likely they would exert any strong influence upon Persian ideas. The Persians being rulers would have made this influence less likely. On the other hand, the Jewish horror of heathen nations together with their devotion to the covenant, erected that high wall of separation which isolated Judaism during more than four centuries. Further, during a large part of the Persian period, the attitude of the satraps toward the Palestinian Jews would not dispose the latter consciously to imitate. Those in the Dispersion would not consciously have adopted Persian ideas when their hearts said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land."[21] No important belief of Judaism was adopted outright from the Iranian faith, but without foreign influence some of the leading beliefs would not have been grasped and so fully developed, as they appear to have been from this time. To trace the resemblances

19. Isa. XLIV:28, XLV:1-4, II Chron. XXXVI:22-23, Ezra I:1-4, II Macca I:18-24, 31-35, Ezra VI:1-15.
20. Zech. VIII:22-23, Isa. LVI:3-8, "Many of the people of the land became Jews." Esther VIII:17.
21. Psa. CXXXVII:4.

> between the two religions, and to indicate something of the probable influence of the one upon the other will occupy the remainder of this volume.
> (pages 38-40)

The conception of Yahweh as God, pre- and post-exile, is then set out as follows:

> The prophets of the eighth century do not expressly declare, though their teachings may imply it, that Yahveh is God alone. It is in the age of Deuteronomy and of the later writers that Yahveh's sole Godhead is emphasized. This conception as well as the movement toward universalism was aided by contact with the great empires. The exile purified to a large degree the popular half-heathen idea of Yahveh. The people were made to feel their dependence on Yahveh who rules supreme in the universe. From this time there developed the truth that Yahveh rules in human affairs, which is strongly expressed in Job, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Zechariah, and some of the Psalms.[22] Yahveh was no longer a tribal God, but the universal God and Ruler, and His house was to be "called a house of prayer for all peoples." Yahveh was supreme above all other gods.[23] The post-exilic writers emphasize the attributes of Yahveh. The wisdom,[24] omnipotence,[25]

22. Zech. II:11, Job. XXXVIII ff, Isa. LVI:3-8, LXVI:1-2, Psa. LXVII, LXXXVI:9, CII:15-22, II Esdras XVI:76, Jud. IX:11.
23. Deut. XXXII:39, II Esdras XIII:15, Baruch IV.
24. Job. XII:13, XXVIII:24-27, Psa. CIV:24, CXXIX:1-3, Dan. II:20, Mal. III:6, Prov. III:19, Isa. XLII:9, XL:13, 14, 28, Wisd. VII:24-30 *et al.*
25. Isa. XLVI:10, Psa. CXV:3, Dan. IV:35, II Esdras VIII:20-24, VI:1-6.

> holiness,[26] justice,[27] love,[28] are frequently mentioned. The personal[29] and spiritual[30] relation between Yahveh and His people between Yahveh and the individual worshipper are definitely and strongly represented. There was a gradual giving up of old anthropomorphisms and a growth in the idea of Yahveh as pure spirit.
>
> — (pages 48-49)

> It is not unlikely that the author of Deutero-Isaiah may have had the Zoroastrian faith in mind, when he represented Yahveh as saying, in an address to Cyrus, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; beside me there is no God. I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things."[31]
>
> — (pages 50-51)

Judaism never did adopt the dualism between Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Instead, Satan was introduced in certain post-exilic writings as a spanner in the works of God. But unlike Ohrmazd, Yahweh is never eclipsed, he is always supreme:

26. Psa. CXI:9, XCIX:9, Isa. XLIII:15, XLIX:7, LVII:15, Lev. XI:44, XXI:8.
27. Job. XXXIV:12, XXXVII:23, Eccle. III:17, XII:14, Psa. XCIV:2, Exo. XXXIV:5-7, II Esdras VII:44.
28. Deut. XXIII:5, Isa. XLIII:1, XLIX:15, LXIII:7, Dan. IX:9, II Esdras V:36-40, VII:62-70, VIII:47.
29. Isa. LXII:5, Psa. CIII:13, Job. XIII:4, Wisd. V:5, XVI:26, Eccles. XXIII:1, Wisd. XVI:26, II Esdras I:28, 88, II:2.
30. Isa. XLVIII:16-17, Job. XXXIII:4, II Esdras XVI:62, Psa. XXXIV:20, LI:10, Wisd. I:2, II Esdras I:37, VII:62-68.
31. Isa. XLV:5-7.

> Only a few sentences need [to] be given to dualism in Judaism. The subject will be involved later in our discussion of angels and demons. In the earlier days Yahveh, though only the tribal God was sole and supreme in the tribe, Yahveh was the author of every phenomenon, good or evil. After the exile the Jews awoke to a realization of the spiritual, antagonistic powers of evil, as they had not known them before. It is not unlikely that the author of Deutero-Isaiah may be rebuking Persian dualism in the words, quoted above, "I form the light and create darkness," etc. An instance in the development of these ideas may be indicated in the books of Samuel and Chronicles, the former compiled several centuries before the latter. In Samuel,[32] Yahveh is angry with Israel and moves David to number them. In Chronicles,[33] Satan "provoked David to number Israel." The conception of Satan in Zechariah,[34] Psalms[35] and Job[36] we probably may attribute to foreign influence. He is represented as planning man's ruin, causing ills and disasters, and even exercising a sort of government. But the Jewish dualism is different from the Persian in this, that Yahveh is never eclipsed or held in subjection even for a time. He is always supreme. The work of Yahveh's creation, as it is told in the early allegorical parables of Genesis, may be marred by the presence of evil,[37] but neither here nor elsewhere is Yahveh's power limited. He is always stronger than Satan and all the powers of

32. II Sam. XXIV:1.
33. I Chron. XXI:1.
34. Zech. III:1-2.
35. Psa. CIX:6.
36. Job. I:6-8, 12, II:1-7. *See also* II Esdras III:21, Baruch IV:7,35.
37. Gen. III:1-15.

> evil. Yahveh, too, existed before the evil came into being. The Jewish dualism was not complete.
>
> — (pages 53-54)

When it comes to pre- and post-exilic angelology, the learned author speaks of a huge borrowing from the Persian religion as follows:

> In the earlier Hebrew days the angel is represented as a being charged with divine authority. It is such a being that appears to Hagar,[38] to Joshua,[39] and to Manoah.[40] It is a distinct angel or messenger, for Yahveh could not be called His own messenger. The fact that evil spirits are said to be sent from Yahveh, perhaps may be due to the nature of their work rather than to the character of the spirits.[41] But there are many traces of magic, and necromancy is a well-defined art.[42] The angels stand as simple ministers or messengers of Yahveh, sometimes appearing in bodily shape. In pre-exilic times they belong to popular rather than to prophetic religion. They occur in the earlier books almost exclusively in the so-called folk-fare stories while the prophets are nearly silent concerning them. After the exile, however, angels spring into prominence and are a distinctive feature of the religion. This prominence is seen in the writings of Ezekiel and Zechariah. The conceptions of these writers is far surpassed by later Judaism. For then we discover the

38. Gen. XVI: 7-13.
39. Josh. V:13, 15.
40. Judg. XIII: 15-21.
41. Judg. IX:23, I Sam. XVI: 14-23.
42. I Sam. XVI:23, II Ki. III:15, I Sam. XXVIII: 3-20, Isa. VIII:19, XXIX:4.

highly developed system and hierarchy of angels, which is represented in Daniel and Enoch, and in still later times is everywhere recognized. It became in time a vast and intricate system colored by prurient imagination, superstition, and foreign elements, and is described in the most hyperbolic language. In the time in which the Jews were in touch with the Persian religion, not only a complete system of angels was developed but we find the abstract idea of angels and spirits, and names and numbers for spirits all of which is parallel to Zoroastrian conceptions. Yahveh is represented as surrounded by a great multitude of angels who do His bidding.[43] Among these there are archangels, sometimes they are called Watchers and Holy Ones,[44] sometimes they are distinctly referred to as the seven holy angels. "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in before the glory of the Holy One."[45] As Ahura Mazda was recognized as one of the Amesha Spenta, and together they were called the seven Immortal or Holy Ones, it seems probable that the developed Jewish conception which came into prominence at this time had a Persian source. This is implied further in the number seven often occurring in sacred symbolisms.[46] It is after Persian influence that we find names given to the archangels, Gabriel,[47] Michael,[48]

43. Psa. LXVIII:17, CIII:20, CIV:4, CXLVIII:2, II Esdras II:42, 46, II Macca. X:29, Enoch X: 1-15, VI:3, XVI:66.
44. Dan. IV:13, 17, 23, cf. I Tim, V:21, Enoch XII:2, 3, XIV: 1, XV:18.
45. Tobit XII:15, also Enoch XX, cf. Rev. V:5, VIII:2.
46. Ezek. XL:22, 26, XLIII:25-26, XLIV:26, XLV:22, 23, 25 Zek. III:9, IV:2, 10, Dan.IV:16, 23, IX:25, cf. Rev. V:6.
47. Dan.VIII:16, IX:21, cf. Jude 9. Rev. XII:7. Luke I:19-26. 4. Dan. X:13, 21, XII:1, 5-7.
48. II Esdras IV:1, and 6. Job III:17, V:4, XII:15, VIII:2.

> Uhiel,[49] Raphael. The Book of Enoch names the whole seven arch-angels.[50] Long lists of names of angels occur in Enoch, and in other later literature. The names of the Biblical angels are Hebrew, which we would expect on the supposition that the Jews took general conceptions from the Persians and molded them in accordance with their own habits of mind. In the development of these ideas for which Judaism was so largely indebted to Persia, we find, however, the name of one Persian daeva, Asmodeus.[51] The Fravashis in the Zoroastrian faith are at once the souls of the deceased, and the protecting spirits of the living, created before their birth and surviving after their death. They appear in Judaism as guardian angels,[52] and perhaps are the good angels of the second Book of Maccabees.[53]
>
> — (pages 63-66)

Likewise, the new development of the idea of demons, which was otherwise a stranger to pre-exilic Judaism, is stated as follows:

> Much that has been said concerning angels applies to the development of the idea of demons. The early traces of magic and necromancy already have been spoken of. The conception of a personal spirit of evil who is hostile to Yahveh was a growth. In the days of Ahab a

49. Enoch XX:1-7.
50. Enoch XX.
51. Tobit III:8.
52. Psa. XCI:11, XXXIV:7, Zech. IV:1, Dan. X:13, 20-21, cf., Matt. XVIII:10.
53. II Macca. XI: 6, XV:23, also Enoch LXX:4, 9-12, Tobit V:21, Acts XII:15.

scene is presented from the councils of Yahveh in which a spirit is commissioned to be a lying spirit.[54] In the vision of Zechariah, there appears an angel to accuse Joshua, who bears for the first time the title, "Satan," the "Adversary."[55] These are trusted officials; so is Satan in the prologue to the Book of Job,[56] but his attitude has become more antagonistic. The development is seen in the passage in which the chronicler makes Satan instead of the Lord move David to number Israel.[57] Satan develops into a distinct personality, an enemy of Yahveh and all good, and he is surrounded by a hierarchy of evil spirits who do his will. The number of demons is legion, and the names of many are given.[58] The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs mentions two groups of seven evil spirits, as if in contrast to the seven archangels.[59] Belief in the power of demons is an accepted faith.[60] Satan is the head and ruler of the evil spirits.[61] The beginning of all evil is ascribed to these evil angels.[62] They bring only ruin and death to men.[63] The parallel between Satan and Ahriman or Angro-Mainyu is obvious. But the Jews conceived of Satan as a fallen creature. His existence and the partial triumph of the powers of evil does not impugn the sovereignty of Yahveh. The archdemon is far from being equal to Him. The sovereignty of Ahura Mazda is, however, continually assailed by Angro Mainyu. In

54. I Ki. XXII: 19-23.
55. Zech. III:1-2.
56. Job. I: 6-12, II:1-7.
57. Page 48, II Sam. XXIV:1, compared with I Chron. XXI:1.
58. Enoch VII:9.
59. XV:8, LVIII:1-22. Testa. Reuben.
60. Josephus, Anc. Ant. VIII: 2, 5.
61. Enoch LIII:3, VIII, IX, X.
62. Enoch LXIX, Wisd. II: 23-24, Ecclus XXI:27.
63. Baruch IV:7, 35, Job. VI:7, 14, VIII:8.

> the Persian faith the sense of evil is so strong as to give rise to practically an evil deity. In the Jewish faith, the conception of Yahveh is so strong as to keep the evil powers in practical subordination to Him. But for the development of a system of demons, with names and evil functions such as the Jews came to hold, they were probably borrowers from the Persian religion.
>
> — (pages 67-68)

Seven heavens referred to in the Book of Enoch and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is stated then to be a Persian addition (*see* pages 73-74). Likewise, the importance of almsgiving, central to the Persian religion, is picked up by the Book of Tobit, the learned author stating that Persian influence has to account for much of this (*see* pages 87-88).

When it came to rituals and ceremonies, the learned author states:

> In Judaism, the manner and times of prayer were sometimes exactly parallel to Zoroastrian habits,[64] and they equally covered nearly every event of life. With the Jews fire was sacred but not in the sense in which the Zoroastrians held it. It was to have been always kept burning in the temple.[65] It was a symbol of Yahveh,[66] and a means of purification. The work of the priests, and the ceremonial regulations, were elaborate and more strictly defined in the Persian period than they had been before. Cleanness or uncleanness was applied to land, dwellings, clothes, utensils, animals, men and

64. Dan. VI:10, Psa. LV:17, LXXXVIII:13, CXIX:147, I Ki. VIII:48.
65. Lev. VI:12-13.
66. Exo. III.2, XIII:21, XIX:18, Dan. VII:9-10, Mal. III:2, II Macca. I:18-35.

> women, and strict minute laws of purification were enforced. Religious offerings might include a great number of objects, as in the Zoroastrian faith. There were punishments prescribed for every violation of the ritual and ceremonial law. A comparison between the purification laws in the two religions shows many striking resemblances. The effect of the presence of, or the contact with, the dead is a single illustration. The Zoroastrians, however, carried their laws concerning the dead, as well as many other purification and ceremonial laws to much greater length than the Jews.[67]
>
> The rapid development in post-exilic times of the ritualistic and ceremonial regulations, that so characterized later Judaism, we must attribute in part to the rigorous observance by the Persians of more stringent laws and rites. Persian influence is probably responsible for Jewish ceremonialism attaining such far-reaching importance. The feast of Purim, in honor of the deliverance from the schemes of Haman, may be an adopted Persian festival.[68]
>
> (pages 90-91)

The importance of ethics and the upright man in thought, word and deed, is then stressed by the learned author in post-exilic Judaism as follows:

> In pre-exilic times the ethical standards of the people were extremely low. The few writers who have higher conceptions, give little prominence to the inward life. The sins are mostly external and national. The Deuteronomist, Jeremiah and Ezekiel introduce the emphasis upon the inwardness of religion. In post-

67. Vd. VI, VII, VIII, Num. XIX:16, Jer. XVI:4, XXV:33.
68. Esther IX:17-32, II Macca. XV:36, Josephus Ant. XI:6, 13.

> exilic times this receives its highest development in the Psalms. The upright man is good in thought and word and deed.[69]
>
> — (page 94)

When it comes to eschatology, the influence of Zoroastrianism is the most greatly felt. This is set out as follows:

> For detail and vividness of portrayal, and for loftiness of conception, the Zoroastrian ideas of the future condition of the individual, of a judgment, of future rewards and punishments, and of a resurrection, are far in advance of anything to be found in Judaism. Until a late period, Jewish ideas upon the future life were exceedingly shadowy. The conception of Yahveh and nearness to Him, may have implied immortality and future blessedness for the faithful. That does not concern us. The Jews did not see the implication.
>
> In nearly every religion no matter how rude, there is some suggestion of a belief in immortality, though often vague and materialistic in form. Without such a belief, "religion surely is like an arch resting on one pillar, like a bridge ending in an abyss." Yet among the early Jews there is no definite teaching concerning immortality, and no hopeful view of the future life. Sheol is always spoken of with a tone of sadness. It is the final abode of all good or bad. Existence there is colorless. It is a place of silence and forgetfulness.[70] Faith in Yahveh led to individual surmises of a life after death, but these gro[u]pings are only occasional.[71] They

69. Psa. XIX:12-14, XV:2-3, LXXVIII:17-18, LI:12-13, Deut. VI:25, Prov. IV:23, et al.
70. Psa. LXXXVIII:12, CXV:17, Job. XIV:21.
71. Gen. V:24, II Ki. II:11, IV:35, XIII:21, I Ki. XVII:22.

do not represent the faith of the people. The earthly life had strong hold upon the Jewish people. Their hopes of the future related to the enjoyment of Yahveh upon earth and to Israel's glory.

In the Persian period of Jewish writings a belief in immortality has for the first time taken definite form, and this becomes clearer in still later writings. There is a growing hope in the future life. "This present world is not the end." "There is promised us an everlasting hope."[72] There will be happy rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked."[73] All men will be brought to judgment and Yahveh will be their judge.[74]"

— (pages 101-102)

The direct and positive teachings concerning the future life that suddenly appear in the literature of post-exilic times are best accounted for through Zoroastrian influence. The Zoroastrian ideas of the future life probably date from not later than the fifth century B.C., as has been shown. When the Jews came into contact with the Persians holding with fervor the hope of immortality, they could not but ask themselves whether that hope was to be discovered in their own religion. Some would refuse to acknowledge that the great doctrine was a part of the faith, as the later Sadducees. But most of the people were eager to accept the new and inspiring hope. Their misfortunes made them all the more ready to believe in the life to come. As soon as the Jews felt that the hope of the future life had been latent in their faith, and could be

72. II Esdras VII:112, 120, 93-140, VIII:53-55, XIV:35.
73. Dan. XII:2-3, Enoch. XXXVIII:1-3, XC:24-26, Ecclus. IX:12, II Esdras XIV:35, Wisd. V:15-16.
74. Judith XVI:17, Dan. VII:9-10, XII:14, Psa. XCVI:13, Eccle. XI:9, Enoch X:1-10, II Esdras VII:73, 113-115, Wisd. II:22.

> developed from it, they vied with the Zoroastrians in the earnestness with which they maintained it.
>
> — (page 103)

In conclusion, it is stated:

> It has been pointed out already that the main elements of the Zoroastrian faith were for the most part fixed before the Persian period of Jewish history, and that there was probably no marked influence made by the Jews upon the Persian faith. The Jews, however, discovering that their rulers had many conceptions and teachings similar to, and others in advance of their own, would, in receiving and adopting them, easily deduce such teachings and conceptions from their own revelation, with no thought that they were borrowing. At any rate, later generations would think of them as purely Jewish beliefs. While the germs of the beliefs that came into prominence in post-exilic times in Judaism may be present in the earlier writings, the germs alone are not enough to explain the later developments. The explanation is found in the fact that the "germs which lay hidden in Judaism were fertilized by contact with the Persian religion." To this foreign contact, therefore, we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity. The Jews were not only influenced by contact with the Persian faith, but by those who became converts to Judaism. As to-day a person changing from one faith to another decidedly different carries into the new faith some of his old influences, so the very fact that many Persians became Jews[75] would favor the development or adoption of beliefs already latent in Judaism.

75. Esther VIII:17.

> The followers of the Zoroastrian faith probably furnished the stimulus for ideas and beliefs that otherwise might not have come into prominence. These beliefs Judaism preserved and fostered for fuller development under the benign influence of Christianity.
>
> — (pages 105-106)

A delightful essay written by Professor L. H. Mills in 1941, titled 'Zoroaster and the Bible' deals with what has been set out above. The learned author states:

> The most obvious place to search for the doctrines and opinions amid which our Lord grew up is, of course, the Jewish literature of His period, and of that which preceded His appearance. This has been examined to a considerable extent, and much of the greatest interest has been brought to light. The theologies of Egypt should be also examined as well as those of Greece and Rome. From India we have what seem a throng of rich analogies from the Buddhist Scriptures, but our highest authority on the subject is, or was, inclined to doubt the possibility of the historical connection. There remains the ancient Persian theology; and here the historical connection amounts, at one stage at least, to historical identity, and is as such, I believe, universally recognised. Cyrus 'the Persian' brought the Jewish people back when they had become a captive people, and rebuilt the city when it had become a heap. The Book of Nehemiah introduces us to actual scenes with a Persian king. The later Isaiah wrote in the most astonishing terms of one. Book after book of the Bible dates from their reigns, while Magian priests, who were of the religion of Cyrus, came later to do honour to the Son of Mary, and one of the last words uttered by Christ upon the Cross was from the Persian tongue.' That Cyrus was originally,

> or at heart, a Mazda worshipper may be regarded as certain. His name appears in the repeated cuneiform inscription of Murghab, which although it is very short, is yet kindred to the extensive inscription of Darius, who is also prominent as a Scripture character, and the latter expresses homage to Auramazda at every period.
>
> — (pages 5-6)

Interestingly, the learned author speaks of the division of the Jews into Pharisees and Sadducees and then states:

> The connection between Persia and Jerusalem being thus notorious, what analogies do their theologies present? For it is equally notorious that very many new ideas of various descriptions were imported from Persia into Judea; and this being the case, it seems scarcely possible *a priori* that the most serious traces of Persian influence should not appear even in the writings of the New Testament. What are therefore *a posteriori* the positive facts? The first of them is this: we have every reason to believe that some of the most important features of the Pharisaic orthodoxy were, under the providence of God, taught directly or indirectly through the Persian influence, the name 'Pharisee' itself being the equivalent of 'Farsee,' a later form of 'Parsee,' and I need hardly remind the reader that the Pharisaic faith was largely the foundation of our own.
>
> — (page 7)

The seven spirits of angels referred to hereinabove are then referred to by Professor Mills as follows:

> And in the Book of Tobit, which also contains prominently the name of an *Avesta* demon, we have

> an allusion to these seven Spirits (chap. xii. 15). So also in Zechariah (iv. 10) we have the seven which are as the eyes of the Lord, and which run to and fro throughout the whole earth; and this is further expanded in Rev. v. 6:
>
> > And I saw in the midst of the throne a lamb standing as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
>
> — (pages 9-10)

Satan is then referred to as follows:

> Then as to the description of Satan; while criticism casts its doubt upon the presence of Satan in the serpent of Genesis, we gather from the Genesis of the *Avesta* that the Scriptural reptile may well be recognised as that old Serpent the Devil. A serpent tempts in Genesis, and the consequence is sin and the expulsion from Eden. In the Vendidâd, the Evil Spirit opposes every good object of creation, and the implied consequence is an expulsion.
>
> — (pages 10 -11)
>
> These memorable fragments must have the attention of every learned scribe who heard them; and they must have been constantly repeated in greatly varied forms. They may well have helped to mould Jewish and Christian expressions. Then the Asmodeus of the book of Tobit (iii. 8, 17) is positively the Aeshma-daêva of the *Avesta*, and Aeshma was the wrath-demon of invasion (see Yasna xlviii. 7, etc.). The apparent and superficial

> variations between the Zoroastrian and the Jewish conception of the relation between the Deity and Satan are, of course, to be expected, but we should not allow their approximating resemblance to blind our eyes to their real difference.
>
> — (pages 11-12)

The Sadducees are referred to, as follows:

> And now we come upon something which has the strongest claims upon our attention. Whereas much else in Zoroastrianism may present the analogies of an older but still sister religion we have as to one great particular what all must acknowledge to be in a special sense a prior revelation in the Persian Bible. I fear we too little realise how very uncertain the doctrine of a future life was in the minds of pious Jews, even at the time of our Lord. The Sadducees, as we understand, believed in neither angel, nor spirit, nor resurrection, and the Sadducees shared the power with the Pharisees; in fact, they seemed to have possessed greater social prestige, and several princely high priests were of their clique. It seems to many of us most curious that the sect among the ancient people of God, which especially claimed the title of purists and sticklers for the ancient Pentateuch, should have been absolute disbelievers in what are now widely regarded as the fundamental principles of religion. If such a state of things existed at the time of our Lord, when both the doctrine of immortality and that of resurrection had long been familiar as theories, what must have been the condition of opinion on these subjects while the influence of the Pentateuch, in which these doctrines were not distinctly revealed at all, was as yet not affected by the large addition to canonical

> Scripture made later? And first as to immortality in itself considered.
>
> — (pages 17-18)

This delightful article is then ended, stating:

> During the Captivity the people acquired from their Persian associations an initiation into hopes of a personal resurrection and life beyond the grave, but the old party terming themselves Puritans (?) Sadducees, opposed the growing Zoroastrianism of the masses. Yet this latter tendency became concentrated in a sect which termed itself, or was termed by its predecessor, Pharisees, Farsees, Persians (not 'dividere,' 'separatists'). Those latter developed more and more the tendencies acquired, and finally were the instruments under the Divine Providence in delivering to us some of the most important features of our faith.
>
> To sum up I would say, as speaking from an orthodox point of view, that while the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are unrivalled in their majesty and fervour, constituting perhaps the most impressive objects of their kind known to the human mind, and fully entitled to be described as inspired, yet the humbler but to a certain extent prior religion of the Mazda-worshippers was useful in giving point and body to many loose conceptions among the Jewish religious teachers, and in introducing many ideas which were entirely new, while as to the doctrines of Immortality and Resurrection, the most important of all, it positively determined belief.
>
> But the greatest and by far the noblest service which it rendered was the propagation of the doctrine that virtue is chiefly its own reward, even in the great religious reckoning, and vice its own punishment.

> The time is now past, let us hope for ever, when the Christian apologist recoiled from recognising the very important services which have been rendered to the faith by peoples foreign to the Jews. And surely no one will look askance at the happy fact that not only a small nation to the west of the Jordan held to those great truths on which rest our hopes beyond the grave, but that the teeming millions of Persia also held to them in successive generations. These considerations entitle this ancient lore to our veneration and investigation, It now lies open not merely to the laborious specialist but to the intelligent student, and it is to be hoped that from the mass of human energy devoted to so much that is trivial, some effort may be spared for the study of this rich and influential monument of the past.
>
> — (pages 22-23)

What can be seen from the above is that, thanks to King Cyrus of Persia, Zoroastrianism, as practiced at that time, seeped into Judaism, creating a rift among the Jews – the Pharisees, who accepted Zoroastrian doctrines, and the Sadducees who stuck faithfully to the old religion. The oneness of God is tightened in post exilic Judaism—God being the only source of worship, along with his angels, numbering seven in all. Devils are spoken of in the Apocrypha—one of them being the Zoroastrian demon of wrath, Aeshma. Refined notions of the afterlife creep into Judaism replacing the shadowy notion of Sheol, so much so that there is wholesale borrowing in terms of heaven, hell, a Judgment Day and the resurrection. Cyrus the liberator did as much for Zoroastrianism as he did for Judaism. The Cyrus Cylinder, which was discovered in 1879 also testifies to the fact that Cyrus was tolerant of other religions including the Babylonian religion itself as

the Cylinder tells us that he bowed to the Babylonian God, Marduk.

What is also interesting is that not only was Cyrus tolerant of other religions, but that he believed in affirmative action. He believed that the Jews had been wronged, that their temple had been unjustly destroyed and that therefore, it ought to be rebuilt with his treasury's funds. That this was done at the time of King Darius is attested to in the books of the Old Testament referred to above. One other interesting feature of all this is that the Wailing Wall, which is the only part of the Second Temple which continues to exist after Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE, is part of an outer wall of the Temple built with Persian funds. (The Herodian Temple or the Third Temple which was the second temple greatly embellished by King Herod is not an independent temple, but an embellishment of what already stood—this is clear if one sees the Wailing Wall closely. The older portion of the Wall is at the bottom, whereas what was built above it was probably built by King Herod).

In conclusion therefore, despite certain observations by some scholars to the contrary, it is obvious from a reading of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha that this now forgotten religion profoundly influenced Judaism, both in its belief and in its practice.

Chapter III

Zoroastrianism and Christ

That Jesus Christ was born of a virgin is clear from the Book of Matthew and the Book of Luke in the New Testament. Matthew records the miraculous virgin birth as follows:

> ***The Birth of Jesus Christ***
>
> 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Imman'uel,

> which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.
>
> — (Matthew 1:18-25)

Luke's version of the same event is contained in Chapter 1, Verses 26 to 35, as follows:

> ***Jesus' Birth Foretold***
>
> 26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin espoused to a man whose name Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.
>
> — (Luke 1:26-35)

Six hundred years later, in the Holy Quran, the virgin birth of Jesus is reiterated as follows:

> [19:16] And mention Mary in the Book. When she drew aside from her family to an eastern place.
>
> [19:17]so she screened herself from them. Then We sent to her Our spirit and it appeared to her as a well-made man.
>
> [19:18] She said: I seek refuge from you in the Beneficent, if you are one guarding against evil.
>
> [19:19] He said: I am only bearer of a message of your Lord: That I will give you a pure boy.
>
> [19:20] She said: How can I have a son and man has not yet touched me, nor have I been unchaste?
>
> [19:21] He said: So (it will be). Your Lord says: It is easy to Me; and that We may make him a sign to people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed.
>
> [19:22] Then she conceived him, and withdrew with him to a remote place.
>
> [19:23] And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree. She said: Oh, I wish I had died before this, and had been a thing quite forgotten!
>
> [19:24] So a voice came to her from beneath her: Do not grieve, surely your Lord has provided a stream beneath you.

[19:25] And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates.

[19:26] So eat and drink and be comforted. Then if you see any mortal, say: Surely I have vowed a fast to the Beneficent, so I will not speak to anyone today.

[19:27] Then she came to her people with him, carrying him. They said: Mary, you have indeed brought a strange thing!

[19:28] Sister of Aaron, your father was not a wicked man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!

[19:29] But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?

[19:30] He said: I am indeed a servant of Allah. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet,

[19:31] and He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and the due charity so long as I live,

[19:32] and to be kind to my mother; and He has not made me insolent, unblessed.

[19:33] And peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised to life.

[19:34] Such is Jesus son of Mary—a statement of truth about which they dispute.

— (The Holy Quran 19:16-34)

In point of fact, in Zoroastrianism, three Soshyants or saviours are said to be born at different points in time, from virgin women, the only difference being that instead of the holy spirit entering Mary's womb, the seed of Zarathustra preserved in a holy lake is said to enter each of the virgins. These three Soshyants or saviours are referred to in the Avesta as Astvat-ereta, Uxshyat-ereta and Soshyos. Astvat-ereta is he who will bring back righteousness and truth; Uxshyat-ereta is he who will once again make righteousness and truth spread; and Soshyos is the last of the three, who will usher in the final Judgment Day, after which the resurrection of all souls takes place. This is stated in the Greater Bundahishn as follows:

> 36. As regards these three sons of Zartosht, such as Ushedar, Ushedarmah, and Soshyant,[76] one says, 'Before Zartosht wedded, they had consigned the glory {khwarrah} of Zartosht for preservation, in the sea Kayansah to the glory of the waters, that is to the Yazad Anahit.' 37. They say, 'Even now they are seeing three lamps glowing at night in the bottom of the sea. And each one of them will arrive when it is their own cycle.' 38. It will so happen that a virgin will go to the water of Kayansah in order to wash her head; the glory {khwarrah} will mingle within her body, and she will be pregnant. They will one-by-one be born thus in their own cycle.
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 33:36)

76. These three persons are the same as the three saviours mentioned above in the Avestan language—these three names are the Pahlavi language's equivalent of the three saviours.

This is also stated in the Denkard, in Book 7, as follows:

> 18. Then, when thirty winters of the tenth century are unelapsed (aranako), a maiden, who is Shapir-abu, walks up to the water; she that is the mother of that good Ushedarmah, and her former lineage is from Vohu-roko-i Frahanyan in the family of Isadvastar, the son of Zartosht that is brought forth by Arang. 19. Then she sits in that water and drinks it, and she kindles in a high degree those germs which were the second of the last that the righteous Zartosht was dropping forth originally, and they introduce that son whose name is the Developer of Worship (that is, he augments liberality). 20. Though fifteen years old, the damsel (zihanako) has not before that associated with men; nor yet afterwards, when she becomes pregnant, has she done so before the time when she gives birth.
>
> — (Denkard, Book 7, Chapter 9:18-20)

> 15. And when thirty winters of the tenth century are unelapsed, that maiden, who is Gobak-abu, walks up to the water; she that is the mother of that testifying Soshyant who is the guide to conveying away the opposition of the destroyer, and her former lineage is from Vohu-roko-i Frahanyan in the family of Isadvastar, the son of Zartosht that is brought forth by Arang. 16. 'That maiden whose title is All-overpowerer is thus all-overpowering, because through giving birth she brings forth him who overpowers all, both the affliction owing to demons, and also that owing to mankind.' 17. Then she sits in that water, when she is fifteen years old, and it introduces into the girl him 'whose name is the Triumphant Benefiter, and his title is the Body-maker; such a benefiter as benefits (savinedo) the whole embodied existence, and such a

> body-maker alike possessing body and possessing life, as petitions about the disturbance of the embodied existences and mankind.' 18. Not before that has she associated with men; nor yet afterwards, when she becomes pregnant, has she done so before the time when she gives birth.
>
> — (Denkard, Book 7, Chapter 10:15-18)

It is as a result of the expectation of Soshyants or saviours being made in the Zoroastrian texts, that the Gospel according to St. Matthew records that 'three wise men' came from the East to Jerusalem, expecting the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, having followed a star to his birthplace. (It may be stated that the "wise men" referred to in the King James Version of the English Bible are none other than three Magi who are Zoroastrian priests—the expression 'Magi' occurs in the earlier Greek and Hebrew versions). The Gospel according to St. Matthew put it thus:

> *The Visit of the Wise Men*
>
> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that

> shall rule my people Israel. 7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. 9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."
>
> — (Matthew 2:1-12)

As a matter of fact, the apocryphal Infancy Gospel makes this even clearer and states that the 'wise men' were fire worshippers who came from the East to Jerusalem according to the prophecy of Zoroaster. The Infancy Gospel is worth quoting and states as follows:

> **Chapter III**
>
> AND it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of Judæa, in the time of Herod the King; the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zoradascht, and brought with them offerings: namely, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and worshipped him, and offered to him their gifts.

2. Then the Lady Mary took one of his swaddling clothes in which the infant was wrapped, and gave it to them instead of a blessing, which they received from her as a most noble present.

3. And at the same time there appeared to them an angel in the form of that star which had before been their guide in their journey; the light of which they followed till they returned into their own country.

4. On their return their kings and princes came to them inquiring, What they had seen and done? What sort of journey and return they had? What company they had on the road?

5. But they produced the swaddling cloth which St. Mary had given to them, on account whereof they kept a feast.

6. And having, according to the custom of their country, made a fire, they worshipped it.

And casting the swaddling cloth into it, the fire took it, and kept it.

8. And when the fire was put out, they took forth the swaddling cloth unhurt, as much as if the fire had not touched it.

9. Then they began to kiss it, and put it upon their heads and their eyes, saying, This is certainly an undoubted truth, and it is really surprising that the fire could not burn it, and consume it.

10. Then they took it, and with the greatest respect laid it up among their treasures."

— (Infancy Gospel 3:1-10)

As a matter of fact, the visit of the Magi and their blessings on Baby Jesus as one of the Soshyants who had been predicted in the Zoroastrian texts is later adverted to in what is known as Levi H. Dowling's 'Aquarian Gospel'—about which more will be said later.

Another interesting facet of Christianity reflecting Zoroastrian thought is to be found in the development of Satan in the New Testament. As has been observed above, Satan in the Old Testament was more an instrument in the hands of God than an adversary to God. The adversarial aspect of Satan, the Devil, gets developed in the New Testament writings and has been commented upon by R. C. Zaehner, in his book *Concordant Discord—the Interdependence of Faiths* being the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion delivered at St. Andrews in 1967 to 1969. This is how the great Avestan scholar, Zaehner, treats the development of Satan in the New Testament:

> But Satan, as he developed out of his Zoroastrian origins, is more powerful and more subtle than his Zoroastrian prototype. Yet in the Zoroastrian confession of faith his essential character is already clearly etched: he is not only an aggressor but also a liar and deceiver:
>
> I must firmly believe, the Zoroastrian neophyte confesses, that there are two principles, one the Creator, and the other the Destroyer. It is the Creator, Ohrmazd, who is all goodness and all light, and the accursed Destroyer, Ahriman, who is all evil, full of death, a liar and a deceiver.
>
> This is the Devil that Zoroastrianism has passed on to Christianity, for it is only in the New Testament that Satan reveals himself in his full and formidable stature. No longer is he associated with God, for we are now told that 'there is none good but one, that is,

God'. In the Old Testament Satan is one of the 'sons' of God whose function, as in Job, is to test the faith and humble the pride of man, while in the matter of David's census Satan, in 1 Chronicles, plays the very part that God himself performs in 2 Samuel: Yahweh and Satan are one and the same. Only in the New Testament is God declared by his other Son, Jesus, to be good; and Satan is shown up in his true colours- and these are Zoroastrian: he is 'all evil, full of death, a liar and a deceiver':

> He was a murderer from the start;
> he was never grounded in the truth;
> there is no truth in him at all:
> when he lies
> he is drawing on his own store,
> because he is a liar, and the father of lies.

He 'was a sinner from the beginning', and 'it was to undo all that the devil has done that the Son of God appeared'. But he is and remains the 'Prince of this world', and though he may have no power over the Christ, it is only with the coming of Christ that his unwearying malice becomes plain for all to see. St. Paul himself, though he was as conscious as anyone of the struggle between spirit and the flesh which is natural to our fallen nature, knew full well that this was not the real battle in our struggle against evil. The decisive battle was purely spiritual, 'for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

In the Zoroastrian myth Ohrmazd and Ahriman are twins. In the Bible both Christ and Satan are 'sons' of God. One of the results of the Fall, of man's rise to self-

consciousness and his terror at finding himself alone and separated from his fellow men through having lost the sense of what the Chinese call the Tao, was that Satan entered into him. Hence the first actual sin is murder, Cain's murder of his brother, Abel. What could be more natural?—for Satan was 'a murderer from the start'. But he is also a 'liar and a deceiver' and 'the father of lies'. His will is to smite and to corrupt. We have heard much about evil being transmuted into good: Satan transmutes good into evil, and therein lies his deepest satisfaction. Satan became incarnate in Adam- in the whole human race: God the Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ and through Christ in the Church. Over Christ himself Satan had no power, but at the coming of Christ he 'fell like lightning from heaven' on to the earth. This is his second incarnation, the beginning of his second mission, the corruption and destruction of the Church. His coming was yet more quiet than Christ's: he took no single human form but infiltrated the whole Church, for of all his weapons the most to be feared is his dreadful power to counterfeit all that is holy. His temptation of Christ was open: his temptation of the Church passed unperceived. There is nothing he likes more than to be demythologized, for then he can do his patient work without anyone noticing.

In tempting Christ in the wilderness he for once gave us fair warning- against materialism, against presumption on the divine mercy, and against the lust for power:

> Then Jesus was led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.... And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man

> shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
>
> This is the temptation to which the modern world has succumbed and to which, unless the tide turns, it will increasingly succumb. True, we do not live by bread alone, but for 'every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God' we have substituted a vast array of material superfluities which have already become necessities. Instead of the 'words of God' we have the motor car, television, and washing machines. We have lost all spiritual direction as we bask beneath the sun of Satan as we have never done before:
>
> Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
>
> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.
>
> — (pages 393-395)

After concluding thus, the learned author, in his concluding remarks, goes on to speak of the influence of Zoroastrianism on Christianity as follows:

> To create an abiding interest in Eastern religions in a modern university is not an easy task. The Faculty of Theology is traditionally concerned with the teaching of Christian doctrine and the history of the Christian Church: it has never bothered itself overmuch with its traditional rival, Islam, nor can it be expected to burden the minds of its students with the theories

> and practices of the far remoter Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians. Historically it could, perhaps, have paid a little more attention to the Zoroastrians, many of whose dogmas seem so strikingly to prefigure ideas that we have come to regard as specifically Christian--the freedom of the human will, the reality of heaven and hell, the individual judgement of the soul at death, and a universal judgement on the last day, to mention only the most important. This, however, has not been done; for the Theological Faculty is after all concerned not with the comparative study of religions but with Christianity itself.
>
> — (page 431)

The temptation of Jesus Christ by Satan, briefly referred to by Zaehner, is fleshed out by all three synoptic gospels as follows:

> 1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward ahungered. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." 5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. 6 and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written: He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is also written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the

world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10 then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

— (Matthew 4:1-11)

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

— (Mark 1:12-13)

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. 4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5 And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 for

> it is Written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.
>
> — (Luke 4:1-13)

The Vendidad, an ancient Avestan compilation which deals with matters of religion and the ancient law that applied to Zoroastrians, has a very similar tempting by the Zoroastrian Devil of Prophet Zarathustra. Thus, in Chapter 19 of the Vendidad, the tempting of Zarathustra by the Devil is set down as follows:

1. From the region of the north, from the regions of the north, forth rushed Angra Mainyu, the deadly, the Daeva of the Daevas. And thus spake the evil-doer Angra Mainyu, the deadly: 'Druj, rush down and kill him,' O holy Zarathushtra! The Druj came rushing along, the demon Buiti, who is deceiving, unseen death.

2. Zarathushtra chanted aloud the Ahuna-Vairya: 'The will of the Lord is the law of righteousness. The gifts of Vohu-mano to the deeds done in this world for Mazda. He who relieves the poor makes Ahura king.'

   He offered the sacrifice to the good waters of the good Daitya! He recited the profession of the worshippers of Mazda!

   The Druj dismayed, rushed away, the demon Buiti, who is deceiving, unseen death.

3. And the Druj said unto Angra Mainyu: 'Thou, tormenter, Angra Mainyu! I see no way to kill Spitama Zarathushtra, so great is the glory of the holy Zarathushtra.'

   Zarathushtra saw (all this) within his soul: 'The wicked, the evil-doing Daevas (thought he) take counsel together for my death.'

4. Up started Zarathushtra, forward went Zarathushtra, unabated by Akem-mano, by the hardness of his malignant riddles; he went swinging stones in his hand, stones as big as a house, which he obtained from the Maker, Ahura Mazda, he the holy Zarathushtra.

   'Whereat on this wide, round earth, whose ends lie afar, whereat dost thou swing (those stones), thou who standest by the upper bank of the river Dareja, in the mansion of Pourushaspa?'

5. Thus Zarathushtra answered Angra Mainyu: 'O evil-doer, Angra Mainyu! I will smite the creation of the Daeva; I will smite the Nasu, a creature of the Daeva; I will smite the Pairika Knathaiti, till the victorious Saoshyant come up to life out of the lake Kasava [Kasaoya], from the region of the dawn, from the regions of the dawn.'

6. Again to him said the Maker of the evil world, Angra Mainyu: 'Do not destroy my creatures, O holy Zarathushtra! Thou art the son of Pourushaspa; by thy mother I was invoked. Renounce the good Religion of the worshippers of Mazda, and thou shalt gain such a boon as Vadhaghna gained, the ruler of the nations.'

7. Spitama Zarathushtra said in answer: 'No! never will I renounce the good Religion of the worshippers of

Mazda, either for body or life, though they should tear away the breath!

8. Again to him said the Maker of the evil world, Angra Mainyu: 'By whose Word wilt thou strike, by whose Word wilt thou repel, by whose weapon will the good creatures (strike and repel) my creation, who am Angra Mainyu?'

9. Spitama Zarathushtra said in answer: 'The sacred mortar, the sacred cups, the Haoma, the Word taught by Mazda, these are my weapons, my best weapons! By this Word will I strike, by this Word will I repel, by this weapon will the good creatures (strike and repel thee), O evil-doer, Angra Mainyu! The Good Spirit [Spenta Mainyu] made the creation; he made it in the boundless Time. The Amesha-Spentas made the creation, the good, the wise Sovereigns.'

— (Vendidad 19:1-9)

The parallels between the two sets of temptations are striking. In the Zoroastrian version, the Devil first tries to kill Zarathustra and fails. In the Christian version, the same thing is attempted by the Devil and repulsed by Jesus, when the Devil asks Jesus to go up to the pinnacle of the temple and cast himself down. Equally striking is the allusion to stones. Zarathustra gets ready with the smiting of the Devil and his counter-creation with stones, whereas Jesus is asked to convert stones into bread, leading to the famous statement, 'man does not live by bread alone'. An equally striking parallel is how the Devil asks both the Prophets to renounce God and his teachings, the common answer being that the Devil is repelled with God's teachings.

We now come to a very interesting later Gospel, which is a revelation to an American, Levi H. Dowling, called 'The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ'. In this Gospel, apart from Christ's ministry and resurrection, what Christ did between the ages of twelve and thirty, which is completely missing in the New Testament, is referred to in some detail. Incidentally, this Gospel came to Levi H. Dowling by way of a revelation in the 18th century, being printed as a book only in 1908.

While travelling to the East, Jesus travels to Persia and meets with the three Magi who came all the way to Bethlehem to predict his birth. Chapters 38 to 41 deal with the Persian episode in Jesus's life as follows:

Chapter 38

Jesus crosses Persia. Teaches and heals in many places. Three magian priests meet him as he nears Persepolis. Kaspar, and two other Persian masters, meet him in Persepolis. The seven masters sit in silence for seven days.

1. Four-and-Twenty years of age was Jesus when he entered Persia on his homeward way.
2. In many a hamlet, town and neighbourhood he paused a while and taught and healed.
3. The priests and ruling classes did not welcome him, because he censured them for cruelty to those of low estate.
4. The common people followed him in throngs.
5. At times the chiefs made bold to try to hinder him, forbidding him to teach or heal the sick. But

he regarded not their angry threats; he taught, and healed the sick.

6. In time he reached Persepolis, the city where the kings of Persia were entombed; the city of the learned magi, Hor, and Lun, and Mer, the three wise men.

7. Who, four-and-twenty years before, had seen the star of promise rise above Jerusalem, and who had journeyed to the West to find the new-born king. And were the first to honour Jesus as the master of the age, and gave him gifts of gold, gum-thus and myrrh.

8. These magi knew, by ways that masters always know, when Jesus neared Persepolis; and then they girt themselves, and went to meet him on the way.

9. And when they met, a light much brighter than the light of day, surrounded them, and men who saw the four stand in the way declared they were transfigured; seeming more like gods than men.

10. Now, Hor and Lun were aged men, and Jesus placed them on his beast to ride into Persepolis; whilst he and Mer led on the way.

11. And when they reached the magi's home they all rejoiced. And Jesus told the thrilling story of his life, and Hor and Lun and Mer spoke not; they only looked to heaven, and in their hearts praised God.

12. Three wise men from the North were from Persepolis; and they were Kaspar, Zara and Melzone; and Kaspar was the wisest master of the Magian land. These three were at the home of Hor and Lun and Mer when Jesus came.

13. For seven days these seven men spoke not; they sat in silence in the council hall in close communion with the Silent Brotherhood.
14. They sought for light, for revelation and for power. The laws and precepts of the coming age required all the wisdom of the masters of the world.

Chapter 39

Jesus attends a feast in Persepolis. Speaks to the people, reviewing the magian philosophy. Explains the origin of evil. Spends the night in prayer.

1. A feast in honour of the magian God was being held, and many men were gathered in Persepolis.
2. And on the great day of the feast the ruling magian master said, Within these sacred walls is liberty; whoever wills to speak may speak.
3. And Jesus standing in the midst of all the people, said, My brothers, sisters, children of our Father-God:
4. Most blest are you among the sons of men today, because you have such just conceptions of the Holy One and man.
5. Your purity in worship and in life is pleasing unto God; and to your master, Zarathustra, praise is due.
6. Well say you all, There is one God from whose great being there came forth the seven Spirits that created heaven and earth; and manifest unto the sons of men are these great Spirits in the sun, and moon, and stars.
7. But in your sacred books we read that two among these seven are of superior strength; that one of

these created all the good; the other one created all that evil is.

8. I pray you, honoured masters, tell me how that evil can be born of that which is all good?

9. A magus rose and said, If you will answer me, your problem will be solved.

10. We all do recognize the fact that evil is. Whatever is, must have a cause, If God, the One, made not this evil, then, where is the God who did?

11. And Jesus said, Whatever God, the One, has made is good, and like the great first Cause, the seven Spirits all are good, and everything that comes from their creative hands is good.

12. Now, all created things have colours, tones and forms their own; but certain tones, though good and pure themselves, when mixed, produce inharmonious, discordant tones.

13. And certain things, though good and pure, when mixed, produce discordant things, yea, poisonous things, that men call evil things.

14. So evil is the inharmonious blending of the colours, tones, or forms of good.

15. Now, man is not all-wise, and yet has will of his own. He has the power, and he uses it, to mix God's good things in a multitude of ways, and every day he makes discordant sounds, and evil things.

16. And every tone and form, be it of good, or ill, becomes a living thing, a demon, sprite, or spirit of a good or vicious kind.

17. Man makes his evil thus; and then becomes afraid of him and flees; his devil is emboldened, follows him away and casts him into torturing fires.

18. The devil and the burning fires are both the works of man, and none can put the fires out and dissipate the evil one, but man who made them both.
19. Then Jesus stood aside, and not a magus answered him.
20. And he departed from the throng and went into a secret place to pray.

Chapter 40

Jesus teaches the magians. Explains the Silence and how to enter it. Kaspar extols the wisdom of Jesus. Jesus teaches in the groves of Cyrus.

1. Now, in the early morning Jesus came again to teach and heal. A light not comprehended shown about, as though some mighty spirit overshadowed him.
2. A magus noted this and asked him privately to tell from whence his wisdom came, and what is the meaning of the light.
3. And Jesus said, There is a Silence where the soul may meet its God, and there the fount of wisdom is, and all who enter are immersed in light, and filled with wisdom, love and power.
4. The magus said, Tell me about this Silence and this light, that I may go and there abide.
5. And Jesus said, The Silence is not circumscribed; is not a place closed in with walls, or rocky steps, nor guarded by the sword of man.
6. Men carry with them all the time the secret place where they might meet their God.

7. It matters not where men abide, on mountain top, in deepest vale, in marts of trade, or in the quiet home; they may at once, at any time, fling wide the door, and find the Silence, find the house of God; it is within the soul.
8. One may not be so much disturbed by the noise of business, and the words and thoughts of men if he goes all alone into the valley or the mountain pass.
9. And when life's heavy load is pressing hard, it is far better to go out and seek a quiet place to pray and meditate.
10. The Silence is the kingdom of the soul which is not seen by human eyes.
11. When in the Silence, phantom forms flit before the mind; but they are all subservient to the will; the master soul may speak and they are gone.
12. If you would find this Silence of the soul you must yourself prepare the way. None but the pure in heart may enter here.
13. And you must lay aside all tenseness of the mind, all business cares, all fears, all doubts and troubled thoughts.
14. Your human will must be absorbed by the divine; then you will come into a consciousness of holiness.
15. You are in the Holy Place, and you will see upon a living shrine the candle of the Lord aflame.
16. And when you see it burning there, look deep into the temple of your brain, and you will see it all aglow.
17. In every part, from head to foot. are candles all in place, just waiting to be lighted by the flaming torch of love.

18. And when you see the candles all aflame, just look, and you will see, with eyes of soul, the waters of the fount of wisdom rushing on; and you may drink, and there abide.
19. And then the curtains part, and you are in the Holiest of All, where rests the Arc of God, whose covering is the Mercy Seat.
20. Fear not to lift the sacred board; the Tables of the Law are in the Ark concealed.
21. Take them and read them well; for they contain all precepts and commands that men will ever need.
22. And in the Ark, the magic wand of prophecy lies waiting for your hand; it is the key to all the hidden meanings of the present, future, past.
23. And then, behold, the manna there, the hidden bread of life; and he who eats shall never die.
24. The cherubim have guarded well for every soul this treasure box, and whosoever will enter in and find his own.
25. Now Kaspar heard the Hebrew master speak and he exclaimed, Behold, the wisdom of the gods has come to men!
26. And Jesus went his way, and in the sacred groves of Cyrus, where the multitudes were met, he taught and healed the sick.

Chapter 41

Jesus stands by a healing fountain. Reveals the fact that faith is the potent factor in healing and many are healed by faith. A little child teaches a great lesson of faith.

1. A flowing spring that people called the Healing Fount, was near Persepolis.
2. And all the people thought that at a certain time of the year their deity came down and gave a virtue to the waters of the fount, and that the sick who then would plunge into the fount and wash would be made whole.
3. About the fount a multitude of people were in waiting for the Holy One to come and potentise the waters of the fount.
4. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb, and those obsessed were there.
5. And Jesus, standing in the midst of them, exclaimed, Behold the spring of life! These waters that will fail are honoured as the special blessing of your God.
6. From whence do healing virtues come? Why is your God so partial with his gifts? Why does he bless this spring to-day, and then to-morrow take his blessings all away?
7. A deity of power could fill these waters full of healing virtue every day.
8. Hear me, you sick, disconsolate: The virtue of this fount is not a special gift of God.
9. Faith is the healing power of every drop of all the waters of this spring.
10. He who believes with all his heart that he will be made whole by washing in this fount will be made whole when he has washed; and he may wash at any time.
11. Let everyone who has this faith in God and in himself plunge in these waters now and wash.

12. And many of the people plunged into the crystal fount; and they were healed.
13. And then there was a rush, for all the people were inspired with faith, and each one strove to be among the first to wash, lest all the virtue be absorbed.
14. And Jesus saw a little child, weak, faint and helpless, sitting all alone beyond the surging crowd; and there was none to help her to the fount.
15. And Jesus said, My little one, why do you sit and wait? Why not arise and hasten to the fount and wash, and be made well?
16. The child replied, I need not haste; the blessings of my Father in the sky are measured not in tiny cups; they never fail; their virtues are the same forevermore.
17. When those whose faith is weak must haste[n] to wash for fear their faith will fail, have all been cured, these waters will be just as powerful for me.
18. Then I can go and stay a long, long time within the blessed waters of the spring.
19. And Jesus said, Behold a master soul! She came to earth to teach to men the power of faith.
20. And then he lifted up the child and said, Why wait for anything? The very air we breathe is filled with balm of life. Breathe in this balm of life in faith and be made whole.
21. The child breathed in the balm of life in faith, and she was well.
22. The people marvelled much at what they heard and saw; they said, This man must surely be the god of health made flesh.

23. And Jesus said, The fount of life is not a little pool; it is as wide as are the spaces of the heavens.
24. The waters of the fount are love; the potency is faith, and he who plunges deep into the living springs, in living faith, may wash away his guilt and be made whole, and freed from sin.

— (The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, Chapters 38-41)

The temptation of Jesus by Satan is then stated in Chapter 65 of this Gospel as follows:

Chapter 65

Jesus goes to the wilderness for self-examination, where he remains forty days. Is subjected to three temptations. He overcomes. Returns to the camps of John and begins teaching.

1. The harbinger had paved the way; the Logos had been introduced to men as love made manifest, and he must now begin his Christine ministry.
2. And he went forth into the wilderness to be alone with God that he might look into his inner heart and, note its strength and worthiness.
3. And with himself he talked; he said, My lower self is strong; by many ties I am bound down to carnal life.
4. Have I the strength to overcome and give my life a willing sacrifice for men?
5. When I shall stand before the face of men, and they demand a proof of my messiahship, what will I say?

6. And then the tempter came and said, If you be [the] son of God, command these stones to turn to bread.
7. And Jesus said, Who is it that demands a test? It is no sign that one is [the] son of God because he does a miracle; the devils can do mighty things.
8. Did not the black magicians do great things before the Pharaohs?
9. My words and deeds in all the walks of life shall be the proof of my messiahship.
10. And then the tempter said, If you will go into Jerusalem, and from the temple pinnacle cast down yourself to earth, the people will believe that you are the Messiah sent from God.
11. This you can surely do; for did not David say, He gives his angels charge concerning you, and with their will they uphold lest you should fall?
12. And Jesus said, I may not tempt the Lord, my God.
13. And then the tempter said, Look forth upon the world; behold its honours and its fame! Behold its pleasures and its wealth!
14. If you will give your life for these they shall be yours.
15. But Jesus said, Away from me all tempting thoughts. My heart is fixed; I spurn this carnal self with all its vain ambition and its pride.
16. For forty days did Jesus wrestle with his carnal self; his higher self Prevailed. He then was hungry, but his friends had found him and they ministered to him.

17. Then Jesus left the wilderness and in the consciousness of Holy breath, he came unto the camps of John and taught.

— (The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, Chapter 65)

Equally interesting is the fact that after resurrection, Jesus reappears in front of the three Magi, which is described in Chapter 176 as follows:

Chapter 176

Jesus appears, fully materialised, to the eastern sages in the palace of Prince Ravanna in India. To the magian priests in Persia. The three wise men speak in praise of the personality of the Nazarene.

1. Ravanna, prince of India, gave a feast. His palace in Orissa was the place where men of thought from all the farther East were wont to meet.
2. Ravanna was the prince with whom child Jesus went to India many years ago.
3. The feast was made in honour of the wise men of the East.
4. Among the guests were Meng-ste, Vidyapati and Lamaas.
5. The wise men sat about the table talking of the needs of India and the world.
6. The door unto the banquet hall was in the east; a vacant chair was at the table to the east.

7. And as the wise men talked a stranger entered, unannounced, and raising up his hands in benediction said, All hail!
8. A halo rested on his head, and light, unlike the light of sun, filled all the room.
9. The wise men rose and bowed their heads and said, All hail!
10. and Jesus sat down in the vacant chair; and then the wise men knew it was the Hebrew prophet who had come.
11. And Jesus said, Behold, for I am risen from the dead. Look at my hands, my feet, my side.
12. The Roman soldiers pierced my hands and feet with nails; and then one pierced my heart.
13. They put me in a tomb, and then I wrestled with the conqueror of men. I conquered death, I stamped upon him and arose;
14. Brought immortality to light and painted on the walls of time a rainbow for the sons of men; and what I did all men shall do.
15. This gospel of the resurrection of the dead is not confined to Jew and Greek; it is the heritage of every man of every time and clime; and I am here a demonstration of the power of man.
16. Then he arose and pressed the hand of every man and of the royal host, and said,
17. Behold, I am not myth made of the fleeting winds, for I am flesh and bone and brawn; but I can cross the borderland at will.

18. And then they talked together there a long, long time. The Jesus said,
19. I go my way, but you shall go to all the world and preach the gospel of the omnipotence of men, the power of truth, the resurrection of the dead;
20. He who believes this gospel of the son of man shall never die; the dead shall live again.
21. Then Jesus disappeared, but he had sown the seed. The words of life were spoken in Orissa, and all of India heard.
22. The magian priests were in the silence in Persepolis, and Kaspar, and the magian masters who were first to greet the child of promise in the shepherd's home in Bethlehem, were with the priests.
23. And Jesus came and sat with them; a crown of light was on his head.
24. And when the silence ended Kaspar said, A master from the royal council of the Silent Brotherhood is here; let us give praise.
25. And all the priests and masters stood and said, All hail! What message from the royal council do you bring?
26. And Jesus said, My brothers of the Silent Brotherhood, peace, peace on earth; goodwill to men!
27. The problem of the ages has risen from the dead; has shown that human flesh can be transmuted into flesh divine.
28. Before the eyes of men this flesh in which I come to you was changed with speed of light from human flesh. And so I am the message that I bring to you.

29. To you I come, the first of all the race to be transmuted to the image of the AM.
30. What I have done, all men will do; and what I am, all men will be.
31. But Jesus said no more. In one short breath he told the story of his mission to the sons of men, and then he disappeared.
32. The magi said, Some time ago we read this promise, now fulfilled, upon the dial plate of heaven.
33. And then we saw this man who has just demonstrated unto us the power of man to rise from carnal flesh and blood to flesh of God, a babe in Bethlehem.
34. and after many years he came and sat with us in these same groves;
35. He told the story of his human life, of trials, sore temptations, buffetings and woes.
36. He pressed along the thorny way of life he had risen and overthrown the strongest foes of God and man; and he is now the only master of the human race whose flesh has been transmuted into flesh divine.
37. He is the God-man of to-day; but every one of earth overcome and be like him, a son of God.

— (The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, Chapter 176)

It can thus be seen that the virgin birth of Jesus was predicted in Zoroastrian texts long before he was actually born from Virgin Mary, and the temptations of an adversarial Devil were repelled by Jesus very much in the same way as was repelled by Prophet Zarathustra much before him. Finally, in the Aquarian Gospel of Levi H. Dowling, it is confirmed that the three Magi who went to visit Jesus on his birth were, in fact, met by Jesus in his travels to the East, which included Persia. And there Jesus confirmed the revelation of Zarathustra in the Gathas, that evil is born from moral choice that is given to man, and is not born from an independent adversary of God, as was taught in Persia at the time of Jesus' visit.

Chapter IV

Zoroastrianism and Islam

Islam does not say much about the Persian religion, even though the early Arabs decimated the last of the three great Empires, namely, the Sasanian Empire, at the battles of Qadissiyah in 636 AD and Nahavand in 641 AD. The Holy Quran refers in only one verse to the Magian religion as follows:

> [22:17] Those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the Magians and those who set up partners (with Allah)—surely Allah will decide between them on the day of Resurrection. Surely Allah is a Witness over all things.
>
> — (The Holy Quran 22:17)

From this verse what is clear is that Magians are put together with Jews, Christians and Sabians, all of whom are 'people of the book' i.e. the people who have been instructed by almighty God through a messenger. Despite this, however, the old Zoroastrian faith came under attack in Persia leading to the Parsis having to leave their homeland and settle in India. How did this come about?

The first four Caliphs, followed by the Caliphate consisting of Abu Sufyan's progeny, the Umayyads, tolerated Zoroastrianism presumably because of Chapter 22, Verse 17 of the Holy Quran. However, after the Abbasid Caliphate entered the scene, Zoroastrians began to be persecuted—perhaps because they were treated as fire worshippers and hence, idolaters. The Quranic verse could be explained by saying that despite the fact that Prophet Zarathustra is a messenger of God and that his message has permeated the Persian people, yet the distortion of this message in actual practice making them fire worshippers, does not conform to Prophet Zarathustra's ideals.

However, it is in an enigmatic chapter—Chapter 18 of the Quran, 'The Cave'—that we find a mysterious unnamed prophet, who is not an Old Testament prophet, but who is somebody who instructs Prophet Moses. Verses 60 to 82 deal with this Prophet, thought to be one Khizr, and his instruction to Moses, as follows:

> [18:60] And when Moses said to his servant: I will not cease until I reach the junction of the two rivers, or I will go on for years.
>
> [18:61] So when they reached the junction of the two (rivers), they forgot their fish, and it took its way into the river, being free.
>
> [18:62] But when they had gone further, he said to his servant: Bring us our morning meal, we have certainly found this journey of ours tiring.
>
> [18:63] He (the servant) said: Did you see when we took refuge on the rock, I forgot the fish, and none but

the devil made me forget to speak of it, and it took its way into the river; what a wonder!

[18:64] He said: This is what we sought for. So they returned, retracing their footsteps.

[18:65] Then they found one of Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knowledge from Ourselves.

[18:66] Moses said to him: May I follow you that you may teach me some of the good you have been taught?

[18:67] He said: You will not be able to have patience with me.

[18:68] And how can you have patience in matters in which you do not have a comprehensive knowledge?

[18:69] He said: If Allah please, you will find me patient, nor shall I disobey you in anything.

[18:70] He said: If you would follow me, do not question me about anything until I myself speak to you about it.

[18:71] So they set out, until, when they embarked in a boat, he made a hole in it. (Moses) said: Have you made a hole in it to drown its occupants? You have surely done a terrible thing.

[18:72] He said: Did I not say that you will not be able to have patience with me?

[18:73] He said: Do not blame me for what I forgot, and do not be hard upon me for what I did.

[18:74] So they went on, until, when they met a boy, he killed him. (Moses) said: Have you killed an innocent person, not guilty of killing another? You have indeed done a horrible thing.

[18:75] He said: Did I not say to you that you will not be able to have patience with me?

[18:76] He said: If I ask you about anything after this, do not keep company with me. You will then indeed have found an excuse in my case.

[18:77] So they went on, until, when they came to the people of a town, they asked its people for food, but they refused to entertain them as guests. Then they found in it a wall which was on the point of falling, so he put it into a right state. (Moses) said: If you had wished, you could have taken a recompense for it.

[18:78] He said: This is the parting between me and you. Now I will inform you of the significance of that about which you could not have patience.

[18:79] As for the boat, it belonged to poor people working on the river, and I intended to damage it, for there was behind them a king who seized every boat by force.

[18:80] And as for the boy, his parents were believers and we feared that he might involve them in wrongdoing and disbelief.

> [18:81] So we intended that their Lord might give them in his place one better in purity and nearer to mercy.
>
> [18:82] And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord intended that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure—a mercy from your Lord — and I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that about which you could not have patience.
>
> — (The Holy Quran 18:60-82)

This is followed directly by a reference to Dhu al-Qarnayn in Verses 83 to 101, as follows:

> [18:83] And they ask you about Dhu-l-qarnain. Say: I will recite to you an account of him.
>
> [18:84] Truly We established him (with power) in the land and granted him means of access to everything. [18:85]so he followed a course.
>
> [18:86] Until, when he reached the setting-place of the sun, he found it going down into a black sea, and found by it, a people. We said: O Dhu-l-qarnain, either punish them or do them a benefit.
>
> [18:87] He said: As for him who is unjust, we shall punish him, then he will be returned to his Lord, and He will punish him with an exemplary punishment.
>
> [18:88] And as for him who believes and does good, for him is a good reward, and We shall speak to him an easy word of Our command.

[18:89] Then he followed a course.

[18:90] Until, when he reached (the land of) the rising sun, he found it rising on a people to whom We had given no shelter from it—

[18:91] so it was. And We had full knowledge of what he had.

[18:92] Then he followed a course.

[18:93] Until, when he reached (a place) between the two mountains, he found on that side of them a people who could hardly understand a word.

[18:94] They said: Dhu-l-qarnain, Gog and Magog do mischief in the land. May we then pay you tribute on condition that you raise a barrier between us and them?

[18:95] He said: The power with which my Lord has established me is better, so if only you help me with strength (of men), I will make a fortified barrier between you and them:

[18:96] Bring me blocks of iron. At length, when he had filled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said, Blow. Till, when he had made it (as) fire, he said: Bring me molten brass to pour over it.

[18:97] So they were not able to scale it, nor could they make a hole in it.

[18:98] He said: This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise of my Lord comes to pass He will crumble it, and the promise of my Lord is ever true.

> [18:99] And on that day We shall let some of them surge against others and the trumpet will be blown, then We shall gather them all together,
>
> [18:100] and We shall bring forth hell, exposed to view, on that day before the disbelievers,
>
> [18:101] whose eyes were under a cover from My Reminder, and they could not bear to hear.
>
> — (The Holy Quran 18:83-101)

Dhu al-Qarnayn literally means the two-horned one. The reference here seems to be to the vision of Daniel of the two-horned ram contained in the Book of Daniel, Chapter 8, as follows:

> 2 And I saw in a vision ; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam ; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of U'lai.
>
> 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high ; but one *was* higher that the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing Westward, and Northward, and Southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand ; but he did according to his will, and became great.
>
> 5 And as I was considering, behold, a he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had

> *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken ; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.
>
> — (Daniel 8:2-8)

> 20 The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Me'di-a and Persia. 21 And the rough goat *is* the king of Gre'cia : and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.
>
> — (Daniel 8:20-22)

Daniel's vision refers to the two-horned ram as being the Kings of Media and Persia. This is for the reason that Cyrus the Great, who was born of a Persian father and a Median mother, founded the Achaemenid dynasty which ruled the Persian Empire for over 200 years. The two-horned ram, therefore, clearly points to Persian emperors being followed by a destruction of their Empire by a rough Greek goat, who is none other than Alexander the Great. Thus, if the Holy Quran is to be read along with the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament, what is clear is that the reference to a two-horned one, particularly when it refers to a particular ruler, seems to be to Cyrus the Great, who founded the Achaemenid

dynasty. Considering the fact that Alexander is also spoken of in the same vision of Daniel as a goat who came from the West having a horn between his eyes, Alexander cannot be two-horned, having only a single horn between his eyes. In the Book of Daniel, the two-horned one is clearly Cyrus the Great and the goat who destroys the Achaemenid Empire is Alexander the Great, followed by the Seleucids after Alexander dies. The reference to the two-horned ram pushing Westward, Northward and Southward, so that no beasts may stand before him, equally speaks of the founder of the Achaemenid Empire moving in these three directions, as is mentioned in Chapter 18:86, 90 and 93 (*supra*), so as to expand the United Kingdoms of Persia and Media into a huge empire. Alexander *never* pushed Westward but moved only Eastward. And the Empire, particularly on its Northern side, is required to be protected against Gog and Magog—and this is done by the building of the Wall referred to in the Quran.[77]

77. There is some confusion in the Old Testament as to who and what are Gog and Magog. In Genesis 10:2, Magog is referred to as the son of Japheth. However, in Ezekiel 38:2 and 39:1-6, Gog seems to be an individual who comes from Magog. Finally, they are both treated together in Revelation 20:8, which states as follows:

> And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

St. Jerome identifies Gog and Magog as being barbaric tribes who came from the North, who were none other than the Scythians.

Indeed, Muslim writers have also taken the view that Dhu al-Qarnayn is none other than Cyrus the Great. Zafar Ishaq Ansari's 2006 English translation of *Tafhim-ul-Quran* by Syed Abul A'la Maududi, titled *Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, identifies Dhu al-Qarnayn with Cyrus the Great as follows:

> 62. The identification of Zul-Qarnain has been a controversial matter from the earliest times. In general the commentators have been of the opinion that he was Alexander the Great but the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain described in the Quran are not applicable to him. However, now the commentators are inclined to believe that Zul-Qarnain was Cyrus, an ancient king of Iran. We are also of the opinion that probably Zul-Qarnain was Cyrus, but the historical facts, which have come to light up to this time, are not sufficient to make any categorical assertion.
>
> Now let us consider the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain in the light of his story as given in the Quran.
>
> (1) The title Zul-Qarnain (the two-horned) should have been quite familiar to the Jews, for it was at their instigation that the disbelievers of Makkah put this question to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, we must turn to the Jewish literature in order to learn who was the person known as the two-horned or which was the kingdom known as the two-horned.
>
> (2) Zul-Qarnain must have been a great ruler and a great conqueror whose conquests might have spread from the east to the west and on the third side to the North or to the South. Before the revelation of the Quran there had been several persons who were such great conquerors. So we must confine our research for

the other characteristics of Zul-Qarnain to one of these persons.

(3) This title should be applicable to such a ruler who might have constructed a strong wall across a mountain pass to protect his kingdom from the incursions of Gog and Magog. In order to investigate this thing, we will have to determine as to who were Gog and Magog. We will also have to find out when such a wall was built and by whom and to which territory it was adjacent.

(4) Besides possessing the above-mentioned characteristics, he should also be a God-worshiper and a just ruler, for the Quran has brought into prominence these characteristics more than anything else.

The first of these characteristics is easily applicable to Cyrus, for according to the Bible, Prophet Daniel saw in his vision that the united kingdom of Media and Persia was like a two-horned ram before the rise of the Greeks. (Dan. 8: 3, 20). The Jews had a very high opinion of the two-horned one, because it was his invasion which brought about the downfall of the kingdom of Babylon and the liberation of the Israelites.

The second characteristic is applicable to him to a great extent but not completely. Though his conquests spread to Syria and Asia Minor in the West and to Bakhtar (Balkh) in the East, there is no trace of any of his great expeditions to the North or to the South, whereas the Quran makes an explicit mention of his third expedition. Nevertheless, this third expedition is not wholly out of question for history tells us that his kingdom extended to Caucasia in the North. As regards to Gog and Magog, it has been nearly established that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia who were known by different names: Tartars, Mongols, Huns and Scythians, who had been making inroads on settled

> kingdoms and empires from very ancient times. It is also known that strong bulwarks had been built in southern regions of Caucasia, though it has not been as yet historically established that these were built by Cyrus.
>
> As regards to the last characteristic, Cyrus is the only known conqueror among the ancient rulers, to whom this may be applicable, for even his enemies have been full of praise for him for his justice, and, Ezra, a book of the Bible, asserts that he was a God worshiper and a God fearing king who set free the Israelites because of his God worship, and ordered that the Temple of Solomon should be rebuilt for the worship of Allah, Who has no partner.
>
> In the light of the above, we admit that of all the conquerors, who had passed away before the revelation of the Quran, Cyrus alone is the one to whom the characteristics of Zul-Qarnain are most applicable, but we need more evidence to determine specifically that Cyrus is definitely Zul-Qarnain. Anyhow, there is no other conqueror to whom the characteristics stated in the Quran are as much applicable as to Cyrus.
>
> Historically, it is enough to say that Cyrus was a Persian ruler, whose rise began about 549 B.C. In a few years, he conquered the kingdom of Media and Lydia and afterwards conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. After this no powerful kingdom was left to oppose him. His conquests extended to Sind and the territory known as Turkistan on one side, and to Egypt and Libya and to Thrace and Macedonia and to Caucasia and Khawarzam in the North. In fact, the whole civilized world was under his sway.

If Dhu al-Qarnayn is a Persian Emperor, Cyrus the Great, and this Persian Emperor appears immediately after the episode of the unnamed messenger of God and Moses, it

would be an educated guess that the unnamed messenger who appears in Chapter 18 of the Holy Quran is a Persian prophet. The only Persian prophet who could have possibly existed at the time of Moses, which is roughly around 1200 BC, would be Zarathustra. This would also accord with the fact that Zarathustra is unnamed. All the other messengers who appear in the Quran, appear by name—most of them being Jewish messengers from the Old Testament—save and except Samuel, who is referred to in Chapter 2, Verse 248 as a messenger who speaks of the kingly authority of Saul. The unnamed messenger 'whom we had taught knowledge from ourselves' would perhaps be unnamed because he is not a messenger to any of the Semitic peoples who go back to Father Abraham, thereby making it probable, given the context of a Persian ruler who follows immediately after the verses dealing with an unnamed messenger and Moses, that this messenger taught the Persian people; and most importantly, that this messenger was taught knowledge directly from 'ourselves'—this person could, therefore, be Zarathustra, the Persian messenger, who was revealed this knowledge by Ahura Mazda directly through the Almighty's 'Vohu Manah' or the Good Mind.

The influence of Zoroastrianism on Islam generally has been dealt with by Professor Louis H. Gray of Princeton University in a 1902 monograph *Zoroastrian Elements in Muhammedan Eschatology*. He states:

> The influence of Persia on her Arab conquerors was profound and lasting. In literature especially the current of Iranian thought is manifest, and theology most of all is imbued with Persian elements (Brockelmann, Gesch. der arab. Lit., i. 71- 72). Even before the defeat of Yezdegerd III, the last of the Sassanids, in 642,

> this innovation had begun, for Muhammad himself had incorporated, whether consciously or not, certain features of Zoroastrianism, doubtless already current among the Arabians, into the teachings of Islam.
>
> — (Le Muséon, page 153)

In Zoroastrian eschatology, the learned author speaks of the voyage of the soul after death, in which its good deeds in the form of a maiden of surpassing beauty meets it, as follows:

> According to the Parsi view as it is stated in the Pahlavi texts,[78] which give more detailed information on the eschatology than the Avesta itself, the soul remains for three days after death near the body, in joy or in pain according to its deeds. At the dawning of the fourth day it departs on its journey to its future home. If it has been righteous, it enjoys the sweetest perfumes wafted "from the more southern side, from the direction of God". Here a maiden of surpassing beauty meets it, and in answer to its enquiries declares that she is the impersonation of its good deeds (Yt. xxii. 6-13, 19-36; AV. iv. 9-12, xvii. 2, Dd. viii. 4, xx. 2, xxiv. 2, 4, xxv. 2, 4, Mkh. ii. 114, 158).
>
> — (Le Muséon, pages 154-155)

78. The Iranian texts cited are the following: Avestan, Ys. = Yasna, Yt. = Yasht, Vd. = Vendidad, ed. Geldner, Stuttgart, 1886-1896, Aog. = Aogemadaeca, ed. Geiger, Erlangen, 1878, frag. Tahm. = fragments Tah- muras, ed. Parmesteter, Le ZA. iii. 53-77; Pahlavi, AV. = Arta-i Viraf, ed. Haug and West, Bombay and London, 1872, Bd. = Bundahishn, Dd. = Datistan-1 Dinik. Dk . = Dinkart, Mkh. = Dina-i Mainog-i Khrat, Sd. = Saddar, Sg. = Shikand-Gumanik. Vijar, Sls. = Shayast la-Shayast, all tr. West, SBE. v., xviii., xxiv., xxxvii., xlvii.

This is likewise reflected in Islam:

> So too when the soul of the Muslim has returned to his grave, which "is made broad about him", "there cometh to him a man,[79] with the fairest robes and sweetest perfumes and saith: I shall tell thee the glad tidings which thy Lord desireth to have told thee on this thy day which was promised thee. Then saith the man to him: Who art thou, God's benison upon thee! I have seen no fairer man on earth than thou art. And he answereth: I am thy pious deeds.
>
> — (Le Muséon, page 157)

When it comes to the bad deeds of a human being, for which he or she is dragged down to hell in Islam, two angels of the grave, who are likened to the Iranian demon Vizaresha, is set out by the learned author as follows:

> But the Kafir sees his wickedness appear before him in his narrowed tomb as a hideous man of evil odor, whose first words are a curse (Wolff, 64-65, de Vaux, Fragments d'eschatologie musulmane, CR. Du III. Congres se. int. des Cath., II. Sect., 17, 18, 21). Al-Gazali's Perle precieuse, 21-22, says that this incarnation of the evil soul is a dog or a pig.
>
> The parallelism here noted seems to show clearly that the Muhammedan idea is borrowed from Iran. Haug Arta-i Viraf, Introd., 61-62 and n., has already observed this, but his view that this beautiful maid, the incarnation

79. It is worth noting that the Avestan fravashi is always feminine, and that three archangels, Spenta Armaiti, Haurvatat, and Ameretat, are female. Muhammedanism, on the contrary, has only male angels.

> of the soul of the righteous Mazdayasnian, has probably given origin to the Huris, or celestial virgins, of the Muhammedan paradise is, in my judgment, incorrect, although she is as he adds, probably identical with the Fravashi (cf. Casartelli, 275, Hubschmann, Jahrb. f. prot. Theol., v. 241-242, and see for Indian parallels, Scherman, 120). The Zoroastrain fravashi is practically nothing else but the good deeds of animate beings and good products and properties of the inanimate (Madan, Fravashis, 14, see Casartelli, 112-120, Soderblom, Rev. de l'hist. des. rel., xxxix, 229-260, 373-418, Jackson, Iran, Relig., p. 643, read in proof). and her relations with the soul are pure. The Huri has nothing to do with the Muslim's earthly career, and exists merely for his gratification after death.
>
> It is possible also that we have in the two angels of the grave in the Muhammedan system, Munkar and Nakir, a trace of the Iranian demon Vizaresha, who struggles with the souls of men which have departed, those days and nights when they remain in the world; he carries them on terror-stricken, and sits at the gate of hell. (Bd. xxviii. 18, cf. Vd. xix. 29, and see the picture of Vizaresha in the Persian painting representing the last judgment given by M. D. Conway in the Cosmopolitan, May, 1888, p. 178). Munkar and Nakir, who are not personified in the Quran, appear before the dead in his grave in terrifying aspect and question him concerning his belief or unbelief (Wolff, 65, 71-73). The analogue here suggested is not very strong, but should be cited for the sake of completeness."
>
> — (Le Muséon, pages 158-159)

Referring to the good and evil deeds of every soul being measured and kept in a book, the parallels between Zoroastrianism and Islam are as follows:

With these accounts of the book of the soul we at once compare the Muhammedan life-book, which two angels are writing for each man day by day, one spirit recording his good deeds and the other his evil. The Quran has many allusions to the book of life (Ruling, 18-19), of which a few passages will suffice. Sûr. Lxxxii. 10-12, we read: verily over you are guardians, mighty scribes, knowing what ye do. (Sûr. xlv. 27-28) and thou shalt see all people kneeling. All people shall be called unto their book. That day ye shall be recompensed for what ye have done. This our book will speak truth concerning you. Verily we have transcribed what ye have done. Sûr. Lxxxiv. 7-12: and as for him whose book shall be given him in his right hand, he shall have an easy account, and shall return to his people merrily; and as for him whose book shall be given him behind his back, he shall invoke destruction, and be burned in hell, for verily he was merry with his people. On these teachings the later popular writings enlarged, as was almost inévitable (Wolff, 56, 69-71, 139-141, 144-145, Perle préc., 87-88).

Rashnu the just (*Rasn-i râst*) in the Zoroastrian teaching, like the Egyptian Anubis, holds the yellow golden scales (*tarâcûk-i zart-i zarin*) in which the good deeds of the soul are weighed against his evil deeds. This golden balance is mentioned time and again in the Pahlavi texts, and it renders no favor on any side, neither for the righteous nor yet for the wicked, neither for the lords nor yet the monarchs. As much as a hair's breadth it will not turn and has no partiality, and him who is a lord and a monarch it considers equally, in its decision, with him who is the least of mankind (Mkh. ii. 120-122, cf. AV. v. 5, Dd. viii. 1, and consult Casartelli, 277).

— (Le Muséon, pages 161-162)

Other elements of Persian eschatology consist of the weighing of the soul's good and bad in the scales, for which a balance is then drawn up, after which the soul crosses a bridge either to heaven or hell, as follows:

> The balance and the bridge were borrowed from Parsiism by Islâm (Hûbsehmann, 242). The Qu'rân has references to the balance (Rûling, 20-21), as Sûr. vii. 7-8: and the balance on that day shall be true, and whosesoever balance is heavy, they are happy, and whosesoever balance is light, they are they who have destroyed themselves, because they abused our signs. Sûr. xxi. 48: and we shall set just balances for the day of resurrection, and no soul shall be defrauded in aught, even though it be the weight of a grain of mustard.
>
> On the day of Resurrection, the great balance, which is elaborately described in the Book of the Resurrection (Wolff, 146-147, ef. Perle pree. 58-59) is set up by Gabriel (Wolff, 134) and the simple confession of faith: written on a leaf as large as the head of an ant outweighs all the soul's sins of omission and commission.
>
> According to other Muhammedan accounts the good deeds are weighed in one scale of the balance against the evil deeds in the other, or else the life-books, or even the souls themselves are put in the balance (Rûling, 56, 58-59, Sell, Faith of Islam, 225-226. For Indian parallels see Jackson, Actes du X Congr. des Orient., ii. 65-74, for Egyptian, Modi, J. Bo. Br. RAS., xix. 371).
>
> From the idea of the Chinvat bridge the Muhammedan theologians received the famous bridge as-Sirat (Rûling, 65, Hubschmann, 242, Scherman, 105-106), although in this sense is not found in the Qu'ràn (Rûling, 27). This bridge as-Siràt is thinner than a hair, sharper than a sword, and darker than night (Wolff, 147-148). The righteous pass over it swiftly as a

> lightning flash, but the less upright Muslims consume a longer period in proportion to their guilt, so that some take twenty-five thousand years to complete the journey (Wolff, 109, 114-115, 148-149, Perle préc.,43, 69-70, 72-73). Like Sraosha, who with Atar guides the soul of the pious Mazdayasnian across the Chinvat bridge, Gabriel keeps the Muslim from falling into the pit of hell into which the Kâfir is tumbled headlong (Wolff, 150, cf. also 134). According to other Muhammedan writings the Prophet himself grasps the hands of his faithful and guides them over the awful bridge (Riiling, 64).
>
> — (Le Muséon, pages 164- 165)

Heaven is described in both Zoroastrianism and Islam as consisting of either four or seven, as follows:

> Muhammedan writers, on the contrary, never weary of describing the glories of heaven to which the faithful are to attain (Rûling, 32-34, 64-66, Wolff, 185-207). In one passage in the Qu'rân four gardens of Paradise are mentioned as follows (Sûr. Lv. 46, 62): for him who feareth the judgment of his lord are two gardens, and beside them are two gardens (cf. also Sûr. vi. 7).
>
> They are, however, more usually seven in number (Wolff, 93, 186, 189-191, Perle préc, 35) and above them are the veils of the Majesty (Perle préc.11), where God dwells. The seven heavens, like the seven earths, often mentioned in the Book of the Affairs of the Resurrection (Wolff, 9, 15, 91, 95), are doubtless borrowed from the seven *karsvars* of the Iranian geography (Spiegel, Eran. Alterthumsk., i. 189-190, Geiger, Ostiran.Kultur, 303-304, Casartelli, § 160).

According to Zoroastrians and Muhammedans alike, heaven is filled with material glory. Clad in the most costly apparel the righteous sit on their splendid seats (Aog. 47, AV. vii. 5, ix. 2, xii. i, 9, H, 16, xiii. 2, xiv. 4, 8-9, 12, 14, 17, 20, xv. 9-10, 16, Mkh. ii. 154, 156, as compared with the passages of the Qu›rân referred to by Rûling 55, and Wolff, 204, Perle préc. 88). The sweetest of perfumes are wafted through paradise (Yt. xxii. 19-21, AV. iv. 17, Mkh. ii. 140-144 as compared with Wolff, 61-65, 200, Perle préc., 9, 56, Rûling, 54, de Vaux, 16). Well might Artà-î Vîrâf say (AV. xv. 21-22, cf. Dd. xxvi): l also saw the pre-eminent world of the pious, which is the all-glorious light of space, much perfumed with sweet basil, all-bedecked, all-admired, and splendid, full of glory and every joy and every pleasure, with which no one is satiated, that blessed land where they feast on butter made in mid-spring, and on water, wine, sugar, and honey (Aog. 15-16, cf. Yt. xxii., 18).

Here in Garôtmân, in the Parsi teaching, the angels and archangels, immortal and undistressed, dwell, each seated in order in the presence of God (Dd. Lxxiv. 2, AV. xi. 1-4, Jackson, Arch. f. Religionswiss. i. 365-366, Grundr. d. Iran. Philol. ii. 635). Very similar is the picture presented by Muhammedan accounts (Wolff, 13-15, Perle préc. 2-3) and the Qu›rân says (Sur. xxi 19-20): and they who are in his presence count not themselves too great for his service, nor do they grow weary; night and day they praise him, relaxing not.

— (Le Museon, pages 166-167)

The Zoroastrian System has four hells to correspond with its four heavens. They are Evil Thought (dushû-matô), Evil Word (dushûxtô), Evil Deed (dushû-varstô), and the Darkest (Hell) (târîktûm), where Ahriman dwells as a counterpart of Ormazd in Garôtmân (Yt.

xxii. 33, Mkh. vii. 20-21, Casartelli, §289). Other Pahlavi texts differ slightly, and we read of three hells only, the ever-stationary of the wicked, the worst existence, and the home of the Lie, which forms the populous abode of all darkness and all evil (Dd. xxxiii. 2-4). In Hell there is darkness so gloomy that it is necessary to hold by the hand; and such stench that everyone whose nose inhales that air, will struggle and stagger and fall; and on account of such close confinement no one's existence is possible; and everyone thinks thus: 'I am alone'; and when three days and nights have elapsed, he says thus: 'The nine thousand years before the resurrection and the purification of hell are completed, and they will not release me! (AV. xviii. 7-11, cf. also Aog. xxviii., AV. LIv. 4-11, Bd. i. 3, xxviii. 47, Dd. xxvii., Mkh. vii. 30-31, Casartelli, § 297).

In the earlier period of Muhammedanism only one hell seems to have been supposed to exist, and this was called by many names (Rûling, 27-28). In the Qu'rân hell is described as merciless and terrible, e. g. Sûr. Lxxiv. 28-29: it leaveth naught remaining, and letteth naught escape, consuming men, Sûr. Lxxxvii. 13: then he shall not die therein, neither shall he live. Hell was later divided into seven parts to correspond to the seven heavens, and in each division a separate class of the damned was confined (Wolff, 159-160, Thousand Nights and a Night, 493, tr. Payne, v. 72, Rûling, 62). Darkness and stench are occasionally mentioned as hellish conditions, although they are far less important in the Muhammedan than in the Zoroastrian System. Thus, on the day of resurrection the faces of the blessed are bright, white, and glowing, while the faces of the lost are black and dark (Wolff, 121, 167, Ruling, 15).

— (Le Museon, pages 169-170)

Another interesting doctrine is as to whether those souls who are dragged into hell ultimately emerge and are eternally in bliss or are damned eternally. The Zoroastrian version is that every soul ultimately gets out of hell, whereas the Islamic version is that Muslims alone, on the intercession of Prophet Muhammad, finally enter paradise, but not others. This is stated by the author as follows:

> The Iranians regarded hell simply as a means of purification. Eternal punishment is not a dogma of Zoroastrianism. It is true that the souls of the wicked "until the resurrection and future existence must be in hell, in much misery and punishment of various kinds" (Mkh. ii. 193), but they are destined to reach heaven at last. "When they have undergone their punishment at the renovation of the universe, they attain, by complete purification from every sin, unto the everlasting progress, happy progress, and perfect progress of the best and undisturbed existence" (Dd. xiv. 8, cf. Bd. xxx. 31-32, Dd. xxxii. 10-16, Dk. ix. 17,6, Casartelli, 511-514)[80]. According to Muhammedanism the torments of hell are eternal only for the Kafirs or infidels. Muslims, even though they have fallen into hell on account of grievous sins are pardoned when the Prophet intercedes with God on their behalf, and they enter Paradise after a period of punishment, which must be at least a thousand years. They are not equal, however, to their co-religionists who have never fallen into condemnation, but bear written on their brows the words: "these are the freedmen of

80. (1) On the passage Mkh. xl. 31, "and the bridge and destruction and punishment of the wicked in hell are for ever and everlasting", see West's note ad loc, SBE, xxiv. 81, n. 4, Casartelli, 301. Windischmann, Zor. Stud., 232.

> the Merciful, that were denizens of hell, until Allah in answer to their entreaties wipes the brand away (Wolff, 177-181, Perle prec. 78-79, 81-84, Ruling, 60- 61)."
>
> — (Le Museon, page 176)

Another essential element in Zoroastrian eschatology is the saviour who comes at the end of time as Judgment Day approaches. The Zoroastrian and Islamic parallels here are then stated as follows:

> With the coming of the Soshyant in the Parsi system the second advent of Jesus to slay Antichrist (Ruling, 45- 46, cf., however, 11), or the coming of the Mahdi, a descendent of the Prophet, who is to convert all Jews and Christians to Islam (Darmesteter, The Mahdi past and present, New York, 1885) may be compared.
>
> — (Le Museon, page 180)

Also, on the last day, the visions of mountains disappearing and the earth becoming plain is the same in both the faiths. This is described as follows:

> On the Last Day the mountains will disappear and the most intense heat [will] prevail. According to Bd. xxx. 18-20 the (evil?) star Gochihar will fall from heaven and distress the earth. Then the heat will melt the metal in the world and this fiery tide will sweep over the land to purify it and to cleanse the souls of all men from their sins (cf. also Dd. xxxvii. 109-110, Casartelli, 311, Jackson, Iranische Religion, Chap. ix., in Geiger and Kuhn's GlPh., ii. 683-687, read in proof-sheets). After these events this earth becomes an iceless, slopeless plain; even the mountain [Chakat-i Daitik], whose summit is

> the support of the Chinvar bridge, they keep down and it will not exist (Bd. xxx. 33 cf. also Plutarch, Ir. et Os. 47). Muhammedan eschatology likewise teaches that the mountains are to be levelled at that time. Thus in the Quran xx. 105-106 we read: and they will ask thee concerning the mountains. Say: My Lord will crush them and leave them a desert plain; thou wilt not see among them inequality or depression (cf. also Ruling, 13, 52, Wolff 97-98, Perle prec. 34, 38). Then, too, the sun will be brought within arm's length of the earth, so that its heat will be seventy times greater than usual (Perle prec. 48-49, Wolff, 123).
>
> — (Le Museon, page 181)

In an interesting article by Ignaz Goldziher, "The Influence of Parsism on Islam", the learned author speaks of abiding Parsi influence on Islam at a period subsequent to the Mohammedan conquest as follows:

> We will now produce some instances of the abiding Parsi influence on Islam at a period subsequent to Muhammad's.
>
> From very remote times in Islam only the reciting of the sacred texts, particularly the Qoran, passed for an act of religious merit. There is no question of prayers or religious formulae. It is the reading personal or by others of the Revealed Book or large portions from it that are necessary. Now those who are acquainted with Musalman literature must have often read at the close of the commentary on each *surat*, notes on the merits and the reward earned by reciting a separate chapter or the whole of the Qoran. This idea of the merit acquired by the reading of the text is an echo of the Persian belief in the merit of reciting the Vendidad. A short Yasna as

> well as the long Vendidad-sadeh serves for being read in the interests of any individual either dead, who by it secures the remission of his sins, or alive, for whom it serves the same end. For as it is not possible for a man to live on the earth without committing a sin, it is necessary to have read the Vendidad from time to time to be relieved of the demerits. And now the recital of his sacred Book would secure for the Musalman the same results for the salvation of his soul. Just like the Parsis, the reading of the holy Book is practised by the Musalmans for several days after the death of the member of a family. In our own days we observe this custom of *kiraye* in Musalman families at a condolence visit. The Persian origin of the practice will be confirmed by reference to M. Soderblom's work on the Fravashis in connection with the Parsi feast [for] the dead.
>
> — (pages 6-7)

The learned author then goes on to discuss as to how good and evil are weighed by measure in Islam, something picked up from the older Persian faith, as follows:

> The eschtological doctrine of the *mizan* or balance among the Moslems for the purpose of weighing the good and bad actions of a man after his death is borrowed from Parsism (Prof. William Jackson has shown the Aryan origin of this idea). Just as in the sacred books of the Parsis, the value of the good and bad deeds is calculated in Islam as so many units in weight. One *kintar* of good deeds shall be counted to his credit who reads a thousand verses of the Qoran in a night. The Prophet says: Whoever says a prayer (salat al-janaza) over the bier of the dead earns a *kirat* but whoso is present at the ceremony till the body is

> interred merits two kirats of which one is as heavy as the Mount Chod. The lesser purification *wudu* (such as one performs before saying the prayers) is equivalent to a *mudd*, the complete purification, ghusl, is valued at a *Sa*. The prayer in congregation has twenty-five times higher value than individual prayer. And so al-Muzani, a distinguished pupil of the Imam al-Shafi, one of the principal authorities of the second century, used to say twenty-five individual prayers whenever he chanced not to join us in the common devotions. When a pious soul emigrates from Mecca to Jerusalem, he is aware that he loses three quarters of the value of his prayers; a prayer at Mecca being equal to 10,000 ordinary ones, while one said at Jerusalem was worth only 25 times more. Similarly, one is liable to lose the quantity of merit acquired. Whoever has a dog in his house, if it be not a shepherd dog, has his *bona opera* diminished each day by two kirat. We find here without difficulty the Parsi calculation of good and evil acts by weight and measure. Each step taken in going along with a dead body is a good deed of the value of 300 *stir*: each *stir* is worth 4 *dirhem* so that the 300 *stir* are equal in value to 1,200 *dirhem*, To walk one step without the sacred girdle is an offence, amounting to a *farman*, four steps to a *tanavar*. (A *tanavar* is equal to 1,200 *dirhem*).
>
> — (pages 7-8)

The learned author then speaks of the figure 33 playing an important part in Zoroastrian ritual, which is then echoed in Islam as follows:

> The figure 33 plays an important part in Parsi ritual as has been shown by Darmesteter. Compare a parallel position in the Musalman tradition. I purposely refer but to the most ancient hadith. Thirty-three angels carry

> the praise of man to heaven. Whenever sacred litanies are referred to we find the mention of 33 *tasbih*, 33 *tahmid*, 33 *takbir* and so on — a number which is still to be met with in the litanies of certain mystical Moslem communities. The faith has 333 paths and when the faithful makes his genuflection at prayers, 333 bones and 333 nerves exalt the Deity.
>
> — (page 8)

Originally, Muslims prayed three times a day, like the Jews before them. This was changed to five times in accordance with a Quranic Verse, again emulating Persian custom, as follows:

> The first is the Musalman institution of prayer, the homage which the slave of God renders in prostrating himself in dust before the *rabbal-alamin*, the Lord of all the worlds. 'The number of the daily devotional repetitions, which have their germs in Judo-Christian influence, certainly goes back to a Persian origin. Prayer as instituted by Muhammad himself was originally fixed for two parts in the day. Latterly a third was added (still in the Qoran), for a third portion of the day which Muhammad himself called the middle (al-wusta). Thus the morning prayer, the evening prayer, and the middle one corresponded to the shakharith, minkhah and arbith of Judaism.
>
> But when the religious institutions of the Parsis penetrated more and-more into the circle of the founders of the Musalman rites this was no more sufficient. The Moslem would not remain behind time in comparison with the adepts of Parsism. The five gahs of the Persians, their five times of prayers, were borrowed, as Darmesteter has already seen, by the followers of the

> Prophet, and henceforth the Moslem prayers were not three but five in a day.
>
> — (pages 8-9)

The dog's and the cock's treatment in Zoroastrianism and Islam are then dealt with, as follows:

> We have next to consider the reverse of the model. From time to time there were manifest symptoms of opposition of a reaction of Islam against Persian ideas. As a proof nothing is more typical than the change produced in the sentiments of the Musalmans regarding the dog, the most faithful of our domestic animals. It is a well known fact that from the beginnings of Islam, the dog has been looked upon as a despised animal. "The angels never enter a house where there is a dog or an idol." The Prophet had given orders, we are told, that all the dogs in Medina be put to death especially those of a certain unusual colour. And the theologians of Islam are puzzled to account for the measure. It is related that the Khalif Abu Jafar al Mansur — this hadith is by Ibu Kataiba — being instructed on this point could be furnished with no further explanation by a celebrated scholar of his time, Amribn Ubaid, except, "This is what the hadith says; I do not know its reason." "Because," the Khalif explained, "the dog barks at publicans, and frightens the beggars." It is a matter of doubt whether the Prophet actually took such a measure. For in the Prophet's generation the canine race had not yet come to be hated. It is a fact that at the time of the Prophet dogs were found about mosques and their presence in them in no way was regarded as a profanation of the sanctuaries. Even later we notice from the sentences preserved to us the amicable disposition of the Musalman towards this animal whose touch, however, from the standpoint of

ceremonial law was a most serious pollution. The dog according to a hadith sees things which are invisible to us, i.e. demons.

If you find your dog barking at night, ask for God's help against Satan. This is altogether a Persian mode of thought, the dog shares this property in common with the cock which also the Musalman tradition makes Muhammad regard as an enemy of Satan and which by its crow indicates its having beheld an angel.

In a sentence attributed to Hasan al Basari (died 728 A.D.) which has passed with certain variants in modern Persian poetry the practical Sufi or Fakir is comparable to the dog in a manner which at once reminds us of the well-known description of the dog—in the Avesta "The dog has ten qualities worthy of eulogy all of which ought to be found in a fakir."

How does it then come about that an animal supported in the times of Muhammad even in mosques and which subsequently was found worthy by its qualities to be compared to holy men all of a sudden inspires horror irreconcilable with the gentle conduct prescribed by Islam towards domestic animals? The reply is at once found when we consider the [esteem] which the animal enjoyed among the Parsis in whose midst the Musalmans established themselves. For them it is the animal that drives away evil spirits. The dead body of the Parsi must have its glance before it is conveyed to the dakhma. In ancient times there were pious establishments for the maintenance of the animal to secure its assistance in crossing over the C[h]invat bridge, an act the success or failure of which decided the eternal felicity or eternal damnation of the dead.

Musalman tradition desiring to oppose the religious esteem in which the animal was held by the Persians ascribed to the Prophet the steps for exterminating

> the dog and made contemptible for religious motives a domestic animal cherished in former times.
>
> — (pages 10-11)

Unlike the Bible account, God does not rest on the seventh day after the work of creation. This again has Zoroastrian echoes, as the learned author states:

> Muhammad likewise wanted to maintain among his faithful a belief in the work of the creation in six days; but his Friday is not the day commemorative of it. It is neither the sabbath, the day of repose, nor a day of preparation for the sabbath. It is a day of assemblage for a weekly celebration of the cult. From the commencement it has never been considered a day of repose. "O believers," says Muhammad in the Qoran (lxii, 9-10) "when you are called to prayer on the day of meeting hasten to occupy yourself with God and give up sloth; when the prayer is finished go where you like and look for the gifts of divine favour." The Prophet absolutely repudiates the idea that God rested from his work of creation. This notion is so deeply rooted in the Musalman conscience that he has always considered as a direct polemic against the Jews these words of the Qoran, "We have created heaven and earth and whatever is between them in six days and fatigue has not come over us, *wa ma massana min lughubin* (L. 37).
>
> Now according to the Parsi doctrine the universe was created in six periods and festivals were instituted in remembrance of each of the six periods of creation but not one of them to celebrate the creation of the whole world; so that there is no holy day resembling the sabbath of the Jews. The Parsi theologians combated the Jewish conception of sabbath and especially the idea that God took repose after the work of creation.

> The pazand document which is made known to us by Darmesteter and in which the polemic of the Parsis against the institution of the sabbath has become the expression of a dogma dates in fact from the 9th century, but it is probable that it is but a reflex of older theological discussions.
>
> This opposition to the biblical story of the creation does not seem to have escaped the knowledge of the Arabian Prophet. His spirit was strongly permeated with the idea of the omnipotence of God. This was the *idee mere* which filled his soul, Hence he enthusiastically seized the occasion in adopting the institution of the sabbath to differentiate it by energetic protest against the notion of a god who *takes repose*.
>
> — (pages 14-15)

A. V. W. Jackson in, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Freedom of the Will*, speaks of Mohammedan references to Magians and the doctrine of free will, as follows:

> **IV Muhammadan References to the Magians, or Zoroastrians, and Free Will**
>
> The fact that orthodox Mohammedans looked askance at the Magians, or Zoroastrians, and especially the priesthood, as being exponents of the doctrine of free will can readily be shown, and it has a particular bearing on the subject. In fact, within Islam itself, owing partially to Neo-Platonic and other influences, the free-will tenet gave rise to internal heretical sects. Thus in the religious and philosophic developments during the golden age of Islam in the earlier 'Abbasic period (749-847 A.D.) we have the Muslim schismatic factions of the Kadarites, or 'Partisans of Free Will,' and their offshoot the Mu'tazilites, 'Separatists, or Seceders'

(referred to above), both of which were fully tinctured with the doctrine of free determination as opposed to the fatalistic predestination of the Koran.

The Kadarites, or Kadariyya (from Arabic *kadr*, 'power'), were known by that name because they were exponents of the doctrine of man's free will, and Professor E. G. Browne makes a particular allusion to the spurious Mohammedan tradition – *al-Kadariyyatu Majau hadihi 'L Ummati*, 'the Partisans of Free Will' are the Magians of this Church. A similar citation may be quoted from the eleventh-century Arabic work of al-Baghdadi (d. 1037) entitled *Al-Fark* bain *al-Firak*, in which he says: 'It is reported of the Prophet [i.e. Muhammad] that he condemned the Kadarites [for their free-will doctrine], calling them the Magians of this people.'

The rationalistic Mu'tazilites, particularly mentioned in the Pahlavi tractate quoted above (p. 232), were noted as recognizing man's entire freedom of action, and were therefore coupled with the Magians, as upholders of free will, in a passage by Isfarii'ini (eleventh century A.D.) translated by Tholuck, Ssufimm, p. 242, whose Latin version of the Arabic I here render, preserving the older spelling - Isfara'ini (cod. Ms p. 86). 'The Prophet applied the name of Magians to the upholders of free will, rightly enough. For the Magians ascribe a part of the things decreed to the will of God, and a part to that of the Devil (namely Ahriman); and if you are to believe them, the decrees of God come to pass at one time, and at another time those of the Devil.' (And he adds:) 'Herein, however, the Mutaselites...are more to blame than the Magians, because the latter [the Magians] oppose the will of only a single person to the divine will, whereas the former [the Mutaselites] attribute no less to the choice of every gnat and flea than they do to the divine will.'

> Although the statement of Isfari'ini, strictly interpreted, is rather a polemic against the dualism of the Zoroastrians, we can hardly doubt that the doctrine of human free will was ascribed to them in the current Mohammedan view of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as evidenced by the traditional saying already quoted.

Islam is in the same Semitic tradition as Judaism and Christianity. This is perhaps why the Holy Quran speaks of Magians in only one verse. However, the reference to the unknown messenger in Chapter 18 of the Holy Quran is an enigma that has not been solved till today. Later Islamic tradition states that this unknown messenger is Khizr, a person associated with the colour green. I have attempted to point out that as this unknown messenger, who is obviously outside the Bible tradition and who is followed up by Dhu al-Qarnayn, who as I have endeavoured to point out, is a Persian Emperor, can lead to the educated guess that the unnamed messenger, being outside the Semitic tradition, is an Aryan or Persian messenger. Since Persian messengers go back only to Zarathustra, unlike the many Jewish prophets of the Old Testament, it is a reasonable inference that the unnamed messenger is Zarathustra, given the date of Moses (i.e. roughly, around 1200 BC). If this is so, then Moses' instruction at the hands of Zarathustra would be the first and the last of its kind, namely, a Semitic prophet being directly taught by an Aryan one.

We have seen how there are several Zoroastrian elements in Mohammedan eschatology. The good deeds of a person are in the form of a maiden of surpassing beauty in Zoroastrianism. In Islam, it is the same, except that the maiden is replaced with a man. For the evil that a person

does, the dragging down into hell is graphic, both in Zoroastrianism and in Islam. In Zoroastrianism, it is done by a demon, whereas in Islam, it is done by two angels of the grave. We have also seen how every grain of good and evil done by a human being is measured and kept in a book after which these deeds are weighed in the balance, following upon which, the soul crosses a bridge, either to heaven or to hell, as the case may be. Heaven is fleshed out in both religions as consisting of four or seven different places. Also, every soul that goes to hell finally lives eternally in bliss in Zoroastrianism, as also in Islam, with a caveat—in Islam, it is the Muslims alone who ultimately triumph in paradise, as it is the Prophet who intercedes with God on their behalf. The saviour of mankind who comes at the end of time as Judgment Day approaches is also there in both religions, as is the earth being flattened on the last day before Judgment Day, all mountains disappearing.

We have also seen how in Islamic practice, Persian practice has been assimilated—whether it be the recital of a holy book being an end in itself; the weighing of good and bad actions after a man's death; the figure 33; praying five times a day and the Almighty never being at rest, even after the arduous task of Creation has ended. We have also seen the influence of the Zoroastrian doctrine of free will accepted by certain Islamic groups who were condemned for accepting the same.

In conclusion, it may be stated that just as Zarathustra states in the Gathas that he is the first human being ever to have received a revelation directly from one almighty Creator—God, Prophet Muhammad, being the seal of the prophets, is said to be the 313th and last such messenger. Obviously, what has permeated into Judaism and then Christianity, then

permeates into Islam, being the final account of the same faith that was handed down to the Jewish prophets.

Chapter V

Mithra and Rome, Pagan and Christian

Mithraism is a cult which emanated from the Rigveda; was expressly thrown over by Zarathustra in his break with the old Rigvedic religion; after which Mithra was reintroduced into Zoroastrianism, this time not as a God, but as Yazata or as an angel. What this chapter seeks to establish is the correlation between the Mithra of younger Zoroastrianism and the Mithras of the Roman world, the latter having developed into an extremely powerful cult within the Roman religion, so as to challenge Christianity itself. It ultimately succumbed to Christianity, but not without leaving its traces.

In *the Avestan Hymn to Mithra* by Ilya Gershevitch, the learned author speaks of Mithra as he appeared in the Rigveda, thus:

> In the Rigvedic hymns, whose composition extended over many centuries, Mitra is mentioned more than two hundred times, yet the information the texts offer on the god is exasperatingly meagre. This appears to be due mainly to the predilection of Rigvedic poets for invoking Mitra together with Varuṇa in a compound

mitrā-varunā (meaning 'Mitra and Varuṇa') of the type grammarians call dvandva. What the poets say of *mitrāvarunā* does not substantially differ from the view they take of Varuṇa. Consequently it is not easy to distinguish Mitra's share in the association of the two gods. A. A. Macdonell (*A Vedic Reader*, pp. 118 sq., 134 sq.) has so conveniently arrayed the main Vedic facts concerning mitrāvarunā on the one hand, Varuṇa on the other, that we cannot do better than quote him *in extenso*, printing in italics certain details to which we shall return:

Mitrāvarunā. This is the pair most frequently mentioned next to Heaven and Earth. The hymns in which they are conjointly invoked are much more numerous than those in which they are separately addressed. As Mitra (111, 59) is distinguished by hardly any individual traits, the two together have practically the same attributes and functions as Varuṇa alone. They are conceived as young. Their eye is the sun. Reaching out they drive with the rays of the sun as with arms. They wear glistening garments. They mount their car in the highest heaven. Their abode is golden and is located in heaven; it is great, very lofty, firm, with a thousand columns and a thousand doors. *They have spies* that are wise and cannot be deceived. They are kings and universal monarchs. *They are* also called Asuras, who wield dominion by means of *māyá* 'occult power', a term mainly connected with them. By that power they send the dawns, make the sun traverse the sky, and obscure it with cloud and rain. They are rulers and *guardians of the whole world*. They support heaven, and earth, and air.

They are lords of rivers, and they are the gods most frequently thought of and prayed to as *bestowers of rain*. They have kine yielding refreshment, and streams

> flowing with honey. They control the rainy skies and the streaming waters. They bedew the pastures with ghee (=rain) and the spaces with honey. They send rain and refreshment from the sky. Rain abounding in heavenly water comes from them. One entire hymn dwells on their powers of bestowing rain.
>
> Their ordinances are fixed and cannot be obstructed even by the immortal gods. They are *upholders and cherishers of order* (read 'Truth'). They are *barriers against falsehood*, *which they dispel, hate, and punish. They afflict with disease* those who neglect their worship.
>
> — (pages 4-5)

Mithra is described as one of the Adityas or solar deities in the Rigveda, in Mandala 1, Hymn XLI, as follows:

Hymn XLI

1. NE'ER is he injured whom the Gods Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman,
   The excellently wise, protect.

2. He prospers ever, free from scathe, whom they, as with full hands, enrich,
   Whom they preserve from every foe.

3. The Kings drive far away from him his troubles and his enemies,
   And lead him safely o'er distress.

4. Thornless, Ādityas, is the path, easy for him who seeks the Law:
   With him is naught to anger you.

5. What sacrifice, Ādityas, ye Heroes guide by the path direct,
   May that come nigh unto your thought.
6. That mortal, ever unsubdued, gains wealth and every precious thing,
   And children also of his own.

7. How, my friends, shall we prepare Aryaman›s and Mitra›s laud,
   Glorious food of Varuna?

8. I point not out to you a man who strikes the pious, or reviles:
   Only with hymns I call you nigh.

9. Let him not love to speak ill words: but fear the One who holds all four
   Within his hand, until they fall.

— (Mandala 1, Hymn XLI)

Here he is invoked as the protector of peace and the one who protects the person who keeps his contractual oath, blessing him by bestowing upon him, wealth and prosperity.

In the only hymn in the Rigveda exclusively devoted to Mithra, in Mandala 3, Mithra is described thus:

Hymn LIX

1. MITRA, when speaking, stirreth men to labour: Mitra sustaineth both the earth and heaven.
   Mitra beholdeth men with eyes that close not. To Mitra bring, with holy oil, oblation.

2. Foremost be he who brings thee food, O Mitra, who strives to keep thy sacred Law, Āditya.

He whom thou helpest ne'er is slain or conquered,
on him, from near or far, falls no affliction.

3. Joying in sacred food and free from sickness, with knees bent lowly on the earth›s broad surface,
Following closely the Āditya's statute, may we remain in Mitra's gracious favour.

4. Auspicious and adorable, this Mitra was born with fair dominion, King, Disposer.
May we enjoy the grace of him the Holy, yea, rest in his propitious loving-kindness.

5. The great Āditya, to be served with worship, who stirreth men, is gracious to the singer.
To Mitra, him most highly to be lauded, offer in fire oblation that he loveth.

6. The gainful grace of Mitra, God, supporter of the race of man,
Gives splendour of most glorious fame.

7. Mitra whose glory spreads afar, he who in might surpasses heaven,
Surpasses earth in his renown.

8. All the Five Races have repaired to Mitra, ever strong to aid,
For he sustaineth all the Gods.

9. Mitra to Gods, to living men, to him who strews the holy grass,
Gives food fulfilling sacred Law.

— (Mandala 3, Hymn LIX)

His wrath when an oath is broken is then spoken of in Mandala 7, Hymn LXII**,** which reads as follows:

> 4 O undivided Heaven and Earth, preserve us, us, Lofty Ones! your nobIy-born descendants.
> Let us not anger Varuna, nor Vāyu, nor him, the dearest Friend of mortals, Mitra.
>
> — (Mandala 7, Hymn LXII:4)

Further, in Mandala 7, Hymn LII, Mithra is invoked so that the supplicant may not be held guilty of crimes committed by others:

> **Hymn LII**
>
> 1. MAY we be free from every bond, Ādityas! a castle among Gods and men, ye Vasus.
> Winning, may we win Varuna and Mitra, and, being, may we be, O Earth and Heaven.
> 2. May Varuna and Mitra grant this blessing, our Guardians, shelter to our seed and offspring.
> Let us not suffer for another›s trespass. nor do the thing that ye, O Vasus, punish.
> 3. The ever-prompt Angirases, imploring riches from Savitar the God, obtained them.
> So may our Father who is great and holy, and all the Gods, accordant, grant this favour.
>
> — (Mandala 7, Hymn LII)

Interestingly, Mithra, who is otherwise peaceful, has his fighting done against contract-breakers by Indra, as Mandala 10, Hymn LXXXIX of Rigveda states:

> 9 Men who lead evil lives, who break agreements, and injure Varuna, Aryaman and Mitra,—
> Against these foes, O Mighty Indra, sharpen, as furious death, thy Bull of fiery colour.
>
> — (Mandala 10, Hymn LXXXIX:9)

It will be noticed that most of the time in the Rigveda, Mithra is accompanied by Varuna, the other great Asura of ethics. Whereas Mithra was associated in later times with the fire ordeal, Varuna was associated with the water ordeal. In both ordeals, the contract-breaker was put through a fire or a water trap—if he succeeded even though scathed, it is the Asura, Mithra or Varuna, who has come to his aid, to tell the world that such person is not indeed a transgressor. But if on the other hand, he is a transgressor, then the fire trap or the water trap will expose such a transgressor, who will then have to be dealt with under the law.

When Prophet Zarathustra came onto the scene, he did not mention Mithra even once in the 238 hymns ascribed to him, i.e. in the body of the Gathas, as we know it today. All the 'Asuras' of the Rigveda were replaced by one 'Asura' alone, namely, Ahura Mazda, the supreme God, who is the creator of everything that exists. How then did Mithra resurface in Zoroastrianism?

Traces are found in the Mithra Yasht, which is a later Avestan composition, telling us about the power of this earlier Rigvedic God and his acceptance into the Zoroastrian fold, without which the faith, as preached by Zarathustra, would have met with stiff resistance and would not have been able to spread at all. The first sign of assimilation comes in this Yasht, in Verse 103, as follows:

> 103. Whom Ahura Mazda appointed inspector and supervisor of the promotion of the whole world, who is the inspector and supervisor of the promotion of the whole world, the caretaker who without falling asleep,watchfully protects the creature of Mazdah, the caretaker who without falling asleep, watchfully observes the creatures of Mazdah
>
> — (The Avestan Hymn to Mithra 26:103)

One can see on a reading of this verse, that Ahura Mazda now appoints Mithra as a caretaker of the entire world, who, without ever falling asleep, carefully observes the creatures of Ahura Mazda and looks after them.

Not only does Ahura Mazda appoint Mithra as his caretaker, but he does something more—he actually worships his caretaker so as to make it clear that in younger Zoroastrianism, Mithra now becomes assimilated completely. Thus, in the following verses, Ahura Mazda is said to actually bow to Mithra, as follows:

> 123. Grass-land magnate Mithra we worship…, whom (even) Ahurah Mazdah worshipped in Paradise.
>
> — (The Avestan Hymn to Mithra 31:123)

> 140. Grass-land magnate Mithra we worship. . . 'I will worship Mithra, O Spitamid' (said Ahura Mazdah), 'who is good, strong, supernatural, foremost, merciful, incomparable, high-dwelling, a mighty strong warrior.'
>
> — (The Avestan Hymn to Mithra 33:140)

> 143. whose face blazes like (that) of the star Sirius.
> '(Him) I will worship, O Spitamid' (said Ahura Mazdah)

> 'of whom frequently she, the undeceiving—who shines like the majestic sun's most beautiful creature (*viz.* daylight)—guides the star-decker, supernaturally fashioned chariot built (by him) who is the creative Incremental Spirit! (Him I will worship,) the strong, all-knowing, undeceivable master of ten thousand spies!
>
> — (The Avestan Hymn to Mithra 34:143)

Indeed, so powerful is Mithra that in the first of the three Persian Empires, the Achaemenid Empire, Artaxerxes-I invoked Ahura Mazda, Goddess Anahita and Mithra together. (*See* Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, page 8). Antiochus-I, the Seleucid King who follows after the destruction of the first Empire, also bows to Mithra (*see ibid*, page 14). When the Parthian dynasty takes over in 247 BC, we find a number of emperors having the name 'Mithridates', signifying the unusual importance given to this Yazata or angel in Parthian times. This is important to note, because it is during the reign of the Parthian kings that Mithra is taken over by the Roman soldiery as one of their most powerful Gods to whom they pay obeisance. In fact, the Cilician pirates who were rounded up and defeated by Pompey the Great around 60 BC, were said to have introduced this God into the Roman Pantheon.

However, as has been stated by C. M. Daniels in an article titled, 'The Role of the Roman Army in the Spread and Practice of Mithraism', there appears to be no direct evidence for this. Instead, the learned author states that Mithra was probably adopted as a Roman God much afterwards, in Emperor Nero's time.

My own view on this is that even though there may be nothing to establish that the Cilician pirates brought Mithra

to Rome, yet a very significant event, at around the same time that Pompey rounded up these pirates, took place—the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BC. It may be remembered that it is at this battle that one of the three great Triumvirs of Rome, namely, Crassus—the man who quelled the Spartacus revolt in 73 BC—was defeated and killed by a Parthian General, all the Roman standards being captured by the Parthians. These standards were ultimately handed back only during the reign of Augustus. It would not be a great leap of imagination to say that the Parthian God who prevailed at the Battle of Carrhae, namely, Mithra, became worthy of worship by the Roman soldiery. Even though the Cilician pirates may not have brought Mithra to Rome, it is quite possible that the Battle of Carrhae did.

What then, is the origin of the worship of Mithra by the Roman soldiery? The great Swiss scholar, R. C. Zaehner, in his book, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, definitely ascribes a Persian origin to the adoption of Mithra by the Roman soldier, but through a very interesting route which involves the Zoroastrianised Mithra, dealt with in the Mithra Yasht and the Greater Bundahishn, namely, the 'Pahlavi Book of Creation'. An interesting summary of the Mithra Yasht is given by Zaehner as follows:

Analysis of Mithra Yasht

1. 2–3: the sanctity of contracts.
2. 4-6: the worshipper promises to worship Mithra.
3. 7–11: the god is worshipped by armed charioteers as a god of war.
4. 12-16: Mithra's triumphant progress from east to west in which he precedes the sun.

5. 17-27: the god's prowess in war and his relentless chastisement of those who lie to him by violating their contracts.

6. 28-34: Mithra as the dispenser of victory and prosperity to the followers of Truth.

7. 35-43: Mithra, the lord God of hosts and 'levier of armies', the gruesome chastiser of those who dare to break their contracts, the god who manifests himself in murderous wrath.

8. 44-46: Mithra the 'undeceivable master of ten thousand spies', whose abode is the whole earth and who cannot be deceived.

9. 47-48: the terrible avenger once again.

10. 49-52: the Wise Lord and the Bounteous Immortals build him a house whence he can survey the whole wide world.

11. 53-60: Mithra's first complaint to the Wise Lord that he is not worshipped as other gods are worshipped.

12. 61-66: Mithra as universal provider through whom the waters flow and the plants grow, the giver of flocks and herds, power and sons and life itself—he 'in whose soul is a great and powerful pledge to the Religion'.

13. 67–72: the chariot of Mithra, the 'wrathful lord', drawn by white horses: its way is paved by the Religion of the worshippers of Mazdāh. Verethraghna precedes him in the form of a boar, grinding down all opposition.

14. 73-87: Mithra's second appeal to the Wise Lord, not a complaint this time, but a joyful request which

he knows will not be denied. The followers of Truth acclaim Mithra as the destroyer of their enemies, the protector of the poor and of the cow: they appease him with sacrifice and libation.

15. 88-94: Haoma worships Mithra, having been installed in this function by the Wise Lord. This [new form of the] Religion receives the seal of approval from the Wise Lord and the Bounteous Immortals.

16. 95-101: Mithra, with Sraosha and Rashnu, scours the earth at night, putting the Destructive Spirit, Aēshma (violence or wrath) and all *daevas* and 'lies' to flight. The worshipper prays that he may not get in the way of the wrathful Mithra.

17. 102-103: the Wise Lord appoints Mithra protector and overseer of the whole material world.

18. 104-111: infallibly Mithra detects and chastises those who violate their contracts [because he hates the Lie]; hence he is supremely good. He is determined to enrich those who are true, but to deliver to death and destruction their enemies who offer him improper sacrifices.

19. 112-114: the destruction of those who offer 'heavy sacrifices'.

20. 115-118: various kinds of contract: Mithra's promise to thwart the Destructive Spirit.

21. 119-122: the Wise Lord lays down the rite according to which Mithra is to be worshipped.

22. 123–124: the Wise Lord worships Mithra in heaven, the House of Song.

23. 124-135: Mithra rides forth from the House of Song in his fair chariot drawn by four white steeds. He is accompanied by the most righteous Chishtā, the Likeness of the Religion of the worshippers of Mazdāh and by the 'blazing Fire that is the strong Fortune of kings (*kavaēm khwarenô*)'. Description of his weapons and the discomfiture of the Destructive Spirit and his henchmen. Another prayer that Mithra will not strike the worshipper in his wrath.

24. 136: his one-wheeled golden chariot.

25. 137-139: Mithra's favour to the man who is an 'incarnate word' and who performs the rite correctly: his displeasure at the man who is no incarnate word and no follower of Truth and who, though he performs the rite correctly, does not win the approval of the Wise Lord, the Bounteous Immortals, or of Mithra.

26. 140-141: Mithra worshipped as good, as a 'strong charioteer', the 'merciful', and the 'undeceivable'.

27. 142-144: Mithra worshipped as the light that illumines the whole world.

28. 145: 'by the *barsom* plant we worship Mithra and Ahura, the exalted [lords] of Truth, forever free from corruption: [we worship] the stars, moon, and sun. We worship Mithra, the lord of all lands.'

— (pages 107-108)

Zaehnar then assimilates the sacrifice of the primeval bull with the Haoma cult which existed in the Rigveda, as follows:

> So far as we can tell, the Haoma rite has been the central liturgical act of Zoroastrianism ever since that religion developed liturgical worship; and the central position it enjoys has never at any time been disputed. This is, however, not true of animal sacrifice: in later times this was practised by some but opposed by others. The *Yasna* ceremony, as it survives in the Avestan text, was, however, quite clearly originally an animal sacrifice as well as a sacrament involving the immolation of the Haoma plant. This emerges clearly enough from the offering of *gāush hudão*, 'the beneficent ox (bull or cow)', and the *gām jivyām*, 'the living cow' (still translated as "meat' in the Pahlavi translation). Traces of it still survive in the *Yasna* as practised by the Parsees today, for the Haoma juice together with consecrated water is strained 'with the help of a ring entwined with the hair of a sacred bull'. Originally this bull must itself have been immolated, and both the sacrificial flesh and the Haoma juice must have been consumed by the sacrificial priests. The flesh and the Haoma appear to have been mixed and the actual slaughter of the animal is still mentioned in the Pahlavi translation of the *Yasna*. Yet, though at the time that the Pahlavi books were written animal sacrifice was already on the way out, it survives in legend, for Saoshyans, the eschatological figure who brings about the resurrection of the dead, sacrifices a bull at the end of time and thereby inaugurates the 'second existence' which Zoroaster had prophesied and in which death will be no more.
>
> — (pages 86-87)

By this, what is established according to the learned author, is the fact that the Haoma cult was originally connected with the worship of Mithra, and not Ahura Mazda (*see* page 94).

This becomes clear from Verses 88 and 89 in the Mithra Yasht:

> 88. Grass-land magnate Mithra we worship…, whom glowing Haoma the healer, beautiful, majestic, and golden-eyed, worshipped on the highest peak of Hara the high, which is called Hukairya by name; the immaculate with immaculate Barsman twigs, immaculate libation, immaculate words;
>
> 89. whom Truth-owing Ahura Mazdah installed as promptly-sacrificing, loud-chanting priest: as Ahura Mazdah's promptly-sacrificing, loud-chanting priest, as the priest of the incremental Immortals, he, the priest, sacrificed (chanting) with loud voice; his voice reached up to the (heavenly) lights, made the round of the earth, pervaded all seven climes.

The learned author then speaks of the gap between the Persian Mithra and the Roman Mithra, which he then attempts to bridge as follows:

> For the moment, however, it is with the re-emergence of Mithra into the pantheon of catholic Zoroastrianism that we are principally concerned. Mithra alone, among the Iranian deities, made a direct impact on the West, for it is this god who, in his migration outside the strictly Iranian lands, became the centre of a mystery cult widely practised by the Roman soldiery throughout the Roman Empire, and whose religion seemed for a time to offer attractions no less powerful than those of a nascent Christianity. Yet the Roman Mithras is strangely different from the Mithra we meet with in the Avesta, for the Roman Mithras is the slayer of the sacrificial bull *par excellence*, and by this act he brings

> new life to the world and offers immortality to the soul; whereas in the Avesta, Mithra plays no such part - rather, he is concerned with the preservation of the life of the kine of whose 'wide pastures' he is the lord. Again the Roman Mithras is a saviour god who releases the human soul from the trammels of a purely mundane existence which is under the severe and hostile control of the Zodiac and the planets, the agents of an unseeing Fate, whereas the Mithra both of the Avesta and the Pahlavi books personifies the sanctity of contracts and thereby becomes the just judge who, with his associates, Rashnu and Sraosha, judges the souls of men according to their deeds. The gap between Mithras, the Saviour, who so nearly won the allegiance of the Western world, and Mithra, the Judge, who ranked second only to the Wise Lord in Iran, is very wide, but this does not mean that the attempt to bridge it is not worth undertaking.
>
> — (page 99)

What becomes clear is that Mithra, originally being a Rigvedic deity, was, after his acceptance into younger Zoroastrianism, worshipped by both the "Ahuras" and the "Daevas", i.e. by those who believed in Ahura Mazda, as well as by those who continued to believe in the old Rigvedic religion. This is also clear from Verse 29 of the Mithra Yasht where Mithra is described as both wicked and good, as follows:

> 29. You, Mithra, are both wicked and very good to the countries, you Mithra, are both wicked and very good to men; you, Mithra, control peace and strife of the countries.

What is important to note is that, just as in the Rigveda where Mithra's right hand is Indra, who strikes down persons

who break contracts, so is Mithra's right hand in the Avesta, Verethragna, in the shape of a wild boar who mows down all those who are contract breakers. Verethragna, according to Zaehner, is none other than Indra, as Indra is referred to as 'Vritrahan' in the Rigveda, which is the Rigvedic equivalent of Verethragna, leading to a fusing of Ahura (Zoroastrian) and Daeva (Rigvedic) ideas in the Mithra Yasht, in which Haoma is considered Mithra's high priest.

The learned author sums all this up as 'The Revised Cult of Ahura and Mithra', as follows:

> The Revised Cult of Ahura and Mithra
>
> Once again Mithra takes his rightful place at the side of Ahura, 'the greatest and best of the gods', but this greatest of the heavenly 'lords' is now the Wise Lord, the Ahura Mazdāh as seen by Zoroaster. The Prophet's reform, then, is now wedded to the cult of Mithra in which not only was the ancient worship of the *ahuras* represented, but into which some of the violence associated with the worship of the *daēvas* had also found its way, and the final invocation not only brings Ahura and Mithra together again in the old dual compound which the ancient Iranians had used to emphasize their intimate union, it also emphasizes the fact that both gods partake not only of the nature of Truth, but also of light, for they are now jointly associated with the sun, moon, and stars. 'By the *barsom* plant we worship Mithra and Ahura, the exalted lords of Truth exempt from corruption: [we worship] the stars, moon, and sun'. . .we worship Mithra, the lord of all the lands.'
>
> The Mithra *Yasht*, then, can be viewed as a piece of religious history in the making: it shows how, once the old cult of Ahura and Mithra had been swept aside by the

> prophetic revelation granted to Zoroaster, and the latter, under the protection of King Vishtāspa, had declared open war on the *daēvas* and their worshippers, some of the latter, in self-defence, sought a *rapprochement* with the *ahura*-worshippers, and, by dropping the individual names of their own daēvic gods, like Indra and Saurva, ensured that the functions they represented persisted both in a fuller figure of Mithra whom they enriched with a warlike function and in subsidiary deities like Verethraghna whose name is nothing less than the stock epithet of their own Indra, now reduced by primitive Zoroastrianism to the status of a demon. With the overthrow of Vishtāspa's Chorasmian kingdom by Cyrus, it would seem that religious passions must have cooled. Primitive Zoroastrianism, coming under the influence of the Magi, sought to broaden its base: the old association between Mithra and Ahura may have served as a pretext, and so Mithra became once again the honoured partner of Ahura, now not just the 'greatest and best' of the gods of the Iranians, but the Wise Lord who alone eternally is, the one self-existent being from whom all others derive, the God who had revealed himself to the Prophet Zoroaster.
>
> — (pages 119-120)

A Greek source, namely Plutarch, is quoted by the learned author to establish the connection between the Mithra of Zoroastrianism and the Roman Mithras as follows:

> Some, says Plutarch recognize two gods—as [if they were] rival artificers—the one the creator of good things, the other of bad: but others call the better power God, and the other a "daemon", as does Zoroaster the Magus. . . He called the one Horomazes (Ahura

Mazdāh, Ohrmazd) and the other Areimanios (Angra Mainyu, Ahriman), and he showed too that of all sensible things the former resembled chiefly light, but the latter, on the other hand, resembled darkness and ignorance. Between the two is Mithras, wherefore the Persians also call Mithras the Mediator. And he taught them to sacrifice to the one votive offerings and thank-offerings, but to the other offerings for averting evil, things of gloom. For pounding in a mortar a herb called Omomi (Haoma, Pahlavi Höm) they invoke Hades and darkness: then, mixing it with the blood of a slaughtered wolf, they bring it out into a sunless place and throw it away. So too they think that certain plants belong to the good God and others to the evil daemon. So too with animals: dogs, birds, and hedgehogs belong to the good [power], while water-rats belong to the evil. Hence they count the man fortunate who has killed the greatest number of them.

'Moreover, they have plenty of mythical stories to tell about the gods, of which these are a sample. Horomazes proceeds from the purest light, Areimanios from the darkness, and they are at war with each other. And Horomazes created six gods, the first of Good Mind, the second of Truth, the third of Good Government, and of the rest the one was the genius of Wisdom, another of Wealth, and the last was the creator of pleasure in beautiful things(?). Areimanios created, as it were, rival artificers to these, equal in number to them.'

This account of Iranian religion preserved by Plutarch represents a half-way house between catholic Zoroastrianism and the Mithraism we meet with in the Roman Empire. The rigid dualism which is already present in the later Avesta, and which was to become so much more marked during the Sasanian period, is plainly there; and the protagonists, Horomazes and

Areimanios, are plainly the Ohrmazd and Ahriman of the Pahlavi texts, the later version of the Ahura Mazdāh and Angra Mainyu of the *Gathas*. Mithra too, whom we have already encountered as essentially the god of this world rather than of the supernal realm over which Ahura Mazdāh reigns, is said to be intermediate between Horomazes and his kingdom of light on the one hand and Areimanios and his kingdom of darkness on the other, just as he is the righteous judge and mediator among both spiritual and material beings." Similarly, the six gods are obviously equivalent to the Zoroastrian 'Bounteous Immortals', the first three corresponding exactly to the Good Mind, Truth, and the 'Desirable Kingdom' of the *Gathās*. Wisdom, too, a hellenization of Right-Mindedness, and 'Wealth' a not inept rendering of 'Wholeness'. Only the creator of pleasure in beautiful things' fails in any way to render the Avestan original-in this case *ameretāt*, 'Immortality'. The wonder is that the correspondences are as exact as they are, not that there are some minor discrepancies. The counter-creations of Areimanios, again, are found both in the later Avesta and the Pahlavi books as is the division of the plant and animal kingdoms into creatures of Ahura Mazdāh and Angra Mainyu. So much, then, is common to the account of Plutarch and the Zoroastrianism we know from the Iranian sources.

What, however, divides the two is the worship accorded to the Lord of the realm of darkness, the pounding of the Haoma in his honour, and the mingling of it with the blood of wolves. In the Pahlavi books the animal creation of Angra Mainyu or Ahriman is divided into two categories—creeping things (*khrafstars*) and the 'wolf species"; and the rite in question is therefore indisputably a rite practised by the *daēva*-worshippers for whom, as for the 'Zoroastrians' of Plutarch's account,

> the *daēvas* were not just demons but elemental powers which could be more or less successfully manipulated by appropriate rites and magic formulas. Similarly, in Mithraism we find inscriptions deo Arimanio, 'to the god Areimanios', which would be unthinkable to even the most 'catholic of Iranian Zoroastrians. Mithra's intermediary status between God on high and the Demon below is also reminiscent of the essentially earthly role of the hero-god Mithras as he appears in the Roman mysteries.
>
> — (pages 124-125)

What is interesting is that the Greater Bundahishn refers to Ahriman, or the Devil, emerging from the sky in the form of a serpent and attacking God's creation, which includes the slaying of the primeval bull. This is mentioned in Chapter 4, Verse 10 of the Greater Bundahishn, as follows:

> 10. Then, the Evil Spirit, with all the dev, agents, rose against the Luminaries; he saw the Sky, which he showed to them spiritually, as it was not produced material; with malicious intent he made an on rush, drew the Sky, which was at the Star station, down towards the void which, as I have written at the commencement, was under the base of the Luminaries and the Planets, so that he stood above the Star station, from within the Sky, up to a one third; like a serpent, , he forthwith wished to drag. the Sky underneath the Earth and to break it; he entered, in the month of Frawardin, and the day of Ohrmazd, at noon; the Sky was as afraid of him as a sheep of a wolf; he, then, came to the Water, which I have said, was arranged underneath this Earth; he, then, pierced and entered the middle of this Earth; then, he came to the Tree; then, to the Gav and Gayomard; then,

> he came up to the Fire; so that, like a fly, he went to all the creations.
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 4:10)

However, when the bull dies, instead of inflicting disaster upon creation, the bull's death leads to vegetation springing up all over the earth. This is portrayed in Chapter 13, Verse 1 of the Greater Bundahishn as follows:

> 1. One says in the Scripture, 'When the sole-created "Gav" passed away, fifty-five species of corn and twelve species of medicinal herbs grew up from there where her pith dropped.'
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 13:1)

Along with this, what must be remembered is that at the end of time, the last great saviour, Soshyos, will appear and sacrifice the bull, Hadayans, so that immortality is brought to all human beings.

At this point Yima enters the scene. Yima is none other than King Jamshid who is referred to disparagingly by Zarathustra, as follows:

> AHUNAVAITI—Yas. 32.8
>
> Among these violent persons were Vivanhuso and Yima, who, desiring to placate mankind, illumined what is material instead of what is spiritual on Earth. From persons such as these may I stand apart on the Day of Judgement.
>
> — (*See* Rohinton F. Nariman, *The Inner Fire*, page 161)

The Yima of the Avesta is said to be none other than Yama, or the first person to die and found another kingdom in another world in the Rigveda.

Yima or Yama means twin. The first question is, the twin of whom? In the later Rigveda, Yama gets paired with Varuna, as is clear from the Mandala 10, Hymns XIV:7, XCVII:16 and CXXIII:6, as follows:

> 7 Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways whereon our sires of old have gone before us.
> Mere shalt thou look on both the Kings enjoying their sacred food, God Varuna and Yama.
>
> — (Mandala 10, Hymn XIV:7)

> 16 Release me from the curse's plague and woe that comes from Varuna;
> Free me from Yama's fetter, from sin and offence against the Gods.
>
> — (Mandala 10, Hymn XCVII:16)

> 6 They gaze on thee with longing in their spirit, as on a strong-winged bird that mounteth sky-ward;
> On thee with wings of gold, Varuna's envoy, the Bird that hasteneth to the home of Yama.
>
> — (Mandala 10, Hymn CXXIII:6)

In younger Zoroastrianism, Yima sets himself against God and is therefore, sawed into two:

> 1. When the Evil Spirit came in, at the beginning of the first millennium in the mingled state, Gav and Gayomard existed. As Mashye and Mashyane practised

> that ingratitude, they had no issue, therefore for fifty years. In this millennium, for seventy years Hooshang and Takhmorap {Tahmurasp} both killed the devs. At the millennium's end, the devs sawed Jam {Jamshed}.
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 33:1)

We are told in the Vendidad as to how Yima becomes sovereign of an underground world as the ice age above has taken over. This underground world or 'Vara' is an earthly paradise which replicates the paradise of Mithra in heaven (*see* Zaehner, page 134).

Yima's twin in the Avesta is Mithra, to whom his "glory" goes, as Yima lies and is thus sawn into two, as we have seen.

> In whose reign there was neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither old age nor death, nor envy made by the Daevas, in the times before his lie, before he began to have delight in words of falsehood and untruth.
>
> — (Yasht 19:33)

> The first time when the Glory departed from the bright Yima, the Glory went from Yima, the son of Vivanghant, in the shape of a Varaghna bird. Then Mithra seized that Glory, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, whose ear is quick to hear, who has a thousand senses. We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of all countries, whom Ahura Mazda has created the most glorious of all the gods in the heavens.
>
> — (Yasht 19:35)

We all know that the spring festival of Nowruz was first introduced by Yima as King Jamshid, whereas the autumn festival of Mehregan is a festival devoted to his twin, Mithra.

As the 'Khwarenah' or glory of Yima has now gone to Mithra, it is Mithra who now carries on the bull sacrifice for the redemption of man (*see* Zaehner, page 141). The conclusion the learned author then draws is stated as follows:

> Thus, that there is a connexion between Mithra and Yima is clear, but we cannot say with any certainty what exact form of the Yima legend gave birth to Mithraism. This much, however, seems assured: the original sacrifice of the bull which made Yima's golden reign possible was performed by Yima himself; but after a thousand years his reign, in which men and kine knew neither death nor disease, came to an end, and Yima took all that was best of them to a dwelling underground. Mithra, meanwhile, took charge of his *khwarenah*, his 'kingly glory' and 'royal fortune', which was also the work he was sent to do on earth. So Mithra, in his turn, must descend on to the earth, both because he is Yima's twin and because his connexion with the earth is already close. There, watched by Yima's royal fortune in raven shape which hovers between Cautes-Yima, the 'royal kinsman', and the sun on the vertical plane, and between the sun and Mithras himself on a diagonal one, he plunges the dagger into the bull that Yima's reign may once again come true: man, though mortal still, is assured of final immortality, and once again will 'men eat food and drink unfailing, cattle and men will not grow old, waters and plants will no more dry up. Neither will there be heat or cold, old age or death, nor yet disease created by the *daevas*.

Conclusion

The Mithraism of the Roman Empire would, then, appear to be a development of a form of Iranian paganism, condemned by Zoroastrians of all shades of opinion as being a cult devoted partially to the *daēvas*:

> but it was [nonetheless] a daēvic cult that had been influenced by Zoroastrianism. Yima whose appeal to the Iranian nation was far too strong for him ever to be forgotten in his homeland becomes the subject of every kind of legend in his native country, and even the Iranian Prophet's condemnation of him could not wrest from him the golden age associated with his name. In the Western migrations of the worshippers of the *daēvas*, however, his name is forgotten, unless he is indeed Cautes, the 'royal kinsman', and the sacrifice he inaugurated is taken over by his twin, Mithra, who brought the Iranian message of immortality and the earnest we have of immortality in the constant renewal of life on earth from the Iranian uplands to the furthest corners of the Roman Empire.
>
> The old Iranian religion, however, passed through many metamorphoses before it reached the shores of the Mediterranean: from Zoroastrianism it borrowed Ahriman, perhaps a devilish caricature of bright Yima himself; and Ahriman too, in passing through Babylonia, became a Gnostic rather than an Iranian devil. He came to hold the keys of heaven, and needed to be propitiated if the soul, imprisoned in this world, was ever to be allowed to return to Mithras, its father in heaven. Identified with an inexorable fate, his body embossed with the Signs of the Zodiac, he held the world captive and thereby became the Prince of this World.
>
> — (pages 143-144)

In the various Mithraea across Europe, which are temples dedicated to Mithra, we find images of Mithra wearing a Phrygian cap, a sword in hand, sometimes with a lion face, accompanied by a snake, a scorpion, a bird and a dog. Each of these has its origins in younger Zoroastrianism. Franz

Cumont, a great Mithra scholar, speculated that the lion head of Mithra is 'Zurvan' or boundless time through whose bosom, the twins, Ohrmazd and Ahriman emerged, that is God, and his counterpart, the Devil. Zaehner is at pains to point out that this is not correct, inasmuch as both the lion and the snake are creatures created by Ahriman the Devil in younger Zoroastrianism. This is so stated in the Greater Bundahishn, as follows:

> 1. One says in the Scripture, "When the Evil Spirit entered, he intermingled the poison of the noxious creatures, the outgrowth of sin, such as that of the serpent, the scorpion, the large venomous lizard, the ant, the fly, the locust, and an immense number of others of this kind, with the waters, the earth, and the plants."2. At the time when their growth came into being, they evolved out of these four begetters, and noxious creatures were on earth knee high. 3. And afterwards during the great deluge, when as is said they perished, the infected water which remained in the sea, and that which remained within the earth, passed back into the land, and all evolved anew, in that stage of evolution and astral body, out of these four begetters, that are the water, the earth, the wind, and the fire, and they will all evolve from one another, in the same manner, also by birth. 4. As their essence, lustre of the eyes, and the wind of life are Ohrmazdean, and as their growth of sinfulness and evil desire in the world are Ahrimanean, this, too, is a great advantage that whenever men see them, they slay them or abstain from them. 5. From this, too, it is manifest that they are not the production of Ohrmazd. For their indigenous astral body and complexion are not similar to those of the beneficent animals and beasts. 6. The manifestation of their coming and perpetration

of injury at night are due to their being of the same substance as darkness, and they do not refrain from injuring the creatures by experiencing fear, injury, and smiting. 7. Their bodies enter into the composition of remedies with a mixture of drugs, and the benefit of the creatures arises therefrom. For their being is from the four Ohrmazdean elements and begetters. 8. All the noxious creatures are of three kinds: watery, earthy, and winged; they speak of the watery noxious creatures, the earthy noxious creatures, and the winged noxious creatures.

— (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 22:1-8)

1. One says in the Scripture, "The Evil Spirit produced the dark and thievish wolf, the most worthy of darkness, noxious, of the darkest race, of black astral body, biting, [without] hair, sterile, and with that disintegrated astral body, for this reason that when it tears the sheep, first its hair may fall off from its body." 2. He forthwith produced it in fifteen species: first, the black dismal wolf, rough and very intrepid, that is, it enters everything it dares to, and then the other wolf species such as even the tiger, the lion, the panther which they also call the 'kaput', the hunting panther, the hyena, the fox which they also call the jackal, the cave digger, the crab, the cat, that which is winged such as the owl, that which is watery such as the water drinker, and even the noxious creature of the jar which they name the wolf of the water, the dark-bodied, and other aquatic species of species which are in the water species, just like other beasts, up to the production of the four-footed wolf which goes in flock when it is small.

— (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 23:1-2)

The scorpion, in turn, is another creature created by Ahriman. The bird and the dog are creatures created by Ohrmazd, or God and occur when Mashye and Mashyane, who were the first man and woman on earth, ate a sheep roasted on a spit and left a quantity of meat in the fire, stating that this is the portion of the fire. They threw another portion towards the sky stating that this is the portion of the Gods. A vulture passed above them and carried it off from them, and what remained was then consumed by a dog. This is stated in the Greater Bundahishn, as follows:

> 17. For thirty days they were in search of food and put on garments of grass. 18. After thirty days they came up to a white-haired goat in the desert, and they sucked the milk from the udder with their mouths. 19. When they had drunk the milk, Mashye spoke to Mashyane, "My tranquility was owing to this that I had not drunk the live milk; I have greater tranquility than that now that I have drunk it, there is satiety to my body." 20. Even owing to that second false utterance strength came up to the devs. Their taste of food was taken away, so much that out of a hundred parts one part remained. 21. Then, after other thirty days, they came to a young sheep having white jaws, whom they slaughtered; they kindled fire from the wood of the lote and the box trees, by the guidance of the spiritual Yazads, as both these woods are much productive of fire; they kindled the fire even by their mouths; they first burned as fuel the pronged oxyacanth[a], the mastic and the fibres of the palm tree. They made a roast of the sheep. They dropped three handfuls of the meat into the fire and said, "This is the share of the Fire," and they tossed a portion of the rest to the sky, and said, "This is the share of the Yazads." 22.

> The bird vulture, having glided by, carried it away from them, as first the dogs ate the meat.
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 14:17-22)

All this is reminiscent of the Mithraic monuments on which a raven, presumably replacing the vulture, is sent by the Sun to observe the sacrifice of the bull by Mithra, where the dog leaps forward to lap up the blood of the dying bull. The Mithraic monuments make it clear that the elixir of immortality, which the blood of the bull contains, does not fall into the hands of mortal man, thereby accounting for the presence of the serpent who obstructs this life-giving blood. The scorpion, another creature of Ahriman the Devil, creeps up to the dying beast's scrotum in the hope of cutting off all further life at its source. All this shows that the Roman version of Mithra slaying the bull clearly has its origins in the Mithra Yasht, read with the Greater Bundahishn, as has been pointed out above.

No account of Mithra, as this divinity spread throughout the Roman Empire, would be complete without a reference to two books by Franz Cumont, namely, 'The Mysteries of Mithra' and 'Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism'.

In *The Mysteries of Mithra*, Cumont refers to how Mithraism spread throughout the Roman Empire, in particular during the reign of Emperor Trajan (98 AD--117 AD) and thereafter. It was essentially a religion confined to the Roman soldier that had no women adherents. A direct link is made between Emperor Nero and Zoroastrian worship (*see* page 85). Also, Emperor Commodus, son of Marcus Aurelius, who ruled between 180 AD and 192 AD, was initiated into the Mithraic Mysteries. Thereafter, during the reigns of Emperor Aurelian and Emperor Diocletian, *sol invictus*, or a worship of the Sun is assimilated with Mithra worship, and takes over

the imagination of the Roman Empire. Sunday is now an important day of rest, being dedicated to the Sun, as is 25 December, which is the birth of Mithra as the solar deity, the Sun being at its lowest ebb on this date. Mithra is born from a rock, has a last supper with the 12 constellations, his apostles, and ascends into the seven spheres of heaven. (*See* Franz Cumont, *The Mysteries of Mithra*, pages 121, 130, 138, 139, 144). The Mithraic slaying of the bull is then described by Cumont, as follows:

> The redoubtable bull was grazing in a pasture on the mountain-side; the hero, resorting to a bold stratagem, seized it by the horns and succeeded in mounting it. The infuriated quadruped, breaking into a gallop, struggled in vain to free itself from its rider; the latter, although unseated by the bull's mad rush, never for a moment relaxed his hold; he suffered himself to be dragged along, suspended from the horns of the animal, which, finally exhausted by its efforts, was forced to surrender. Its conqueror then seizing it by its hind hoofs, dragged it backwards over a road strewn with obstacles into the cave which served as his home.
>
> This painful Journey (*Transitus*) of Mithra became the symbol of human sufferings. But the bull, it would appear, succeeded in making its escape from its prison, and roamed again at large over the mountain pastures. The Sun then sent the raven, his messenger, to carry to his ally the command to slay the fugitive. Mithra received this cruel mission much against his will, but submitting to the decree of Heaven he pursued the truant beast with his agile dog, succeeded in overtaking it just at the moment when it was taking refuge in the cave which it had quitted, and seizing it by the nostrils with one hand, with the other he plunged deep into its flank his hunting knife.

> Then came an extraordinary prodigy to pass. From the body of the moribund victim sprang all the useful herbs and plants that cover the earth with their verdure. From the spinal cord of the animal sprang the wheat that gives us our bread, and from its blood the vine that produces the sacred drink of the Mysteries. In vain did the Evil Spirit launch forth his unclean demons against the anguish-wrung animal, in order to poison in it the very sources of life; the scorpion, the ant, the serpent, strove in vain to consume the genital parts and to drink the blood of the prolific quadruped; but they were powerless to impede the miracle that was enacting. The seed of the bull, gathered and purified by the Moon, produced all the different species of useful animals, and its soul, under the protection of the dog, the faithful companion of Mithra, ascended into the celestial spheres above, where, receiving the honors of divinity, it became under the name of Silvanus the guardian of herds. Thus, through the sacrifice which he had so resignedly undertaken, the tauroctonous hero became the creator of all the beneficent beings on earth; and, from the death which he had caused, was born a new life, more rich and more fecund than the old.
>
> — (pages 135-137)

Cumont then states that the success of Mithraism in the Roman Empire was for the following reasons:

> Its success was in great part undoubtedly due to the vigor of its ethics, which above all things favored action. In an epoch of anarchy and emasculation, its mystics found in its precepts both stimulus and support. The conviction that the faithful ones formed part of a sacred army charged with sustaining with the Principle of Good the

struggle against the power of evil, was singularly adapted to provoking their most pious efforts and transforming them into ardent zealots.

The Mysteries exerted another powerful influence, also, in fostering some of the most exalted aspirations of the human soul: the desire for immortality and the expectation of final justice. The hopes of life beyond the tomb which this religion instilled in its votaries were one of the secrets of its power in these troublous times, when solicitude for the life to come disturbed all minds.

But several other sects offered to their adepts just as consoling prospects of a future life. The special attraction of Mithraism dwelt, therefore, in other qualities of its doctrinal system. Mithraism, in fact, satisfied alike both the intelligence of the educated and the hearts of the simple-minded. The apotheosis of Time as First Cause and that of the Sun, its physical manifestation, which maintained on earth heat and light, were highly philosophical conceptions. The worship rendered to the Planets and to the Constellations, the course of which determined terrestrial events, and to the four Elements, whose infinite combinations produced all natural phenomena, is ultimately reducible to the worship of the principles and agents recognized by ancient science, and the theology of the Mysteries was, in this respect, nothing but the religious expression of the physics and astronomy of the Roman world.

This theoretical conformity of revealed dogmas with the accepted ideas of science was calculated to allure cultivated minds, but it had no hold whatever upon the ignorant souls of the populace. These, on the other hand, were eminently amenable to the allurements of a doctrine that deified the whole of physical and tangible reality. The gods were everywhere, and they mingled in every act of life; the fire that cooked the food and

> warmed the bodies of the faithful, the water that allayed their thirst and cleansed their persons, the very air that they breathed, and the light that illuminated their paths, were the objects of their adoration. Perhaps no other religion ever offered to its sectaries in a higher degree than Mithraism opportunities for prayer and motives for veneration. When the initiated betook himself in the evening to the sacred grotto concealed in the solitude of the forests, at every step new sensations awakened in his heart some mystical emotion. The stars that shone in the sky, the wind that whispered in the foliage, the spring or brook that babbled down the mountain-side, even the earth that he trod under his feet, were in his eyes divine, and all surrounding nature provoked in him a worshipful fear for the infinite forces that swayed the universe.
>
> — (pages 147-149)

In an interesting discussion on Mithraism's effects on early Christianity, Cumont has this to state:

> The struggle between the two rival religions was the more stubborn as their characters were the more alike. The adepts of both formed secret conventicles, closely united, the members of which gave themselves the name of "Brothers." The rites which they practised offered numerous analogies. The sectaries of the Persian god, like the Christians, purified themselves by baptism; received, by a species of confirmation, the power necessary to combat the spirits of evil; and expected from a Lord's Supper salvation of body and soul. Like the latter, they also held Sunday sacred, and celebrated the birth of the Sun on the 25th of December, the same day on which Christmas has been celebrated, since the fourth century

at least. They both preached a categorical system of ethics, regarded asceticism as meritorious, and counted among their principal virtues abstinence and continence, renunciation and self-control. Their conceptions of the world and of the destiny of man were similar. They both admitted the existence of a Heaven inhabited by beatified ones, situate in the upper regions, and of a Hell peopled by demons, situate in the bowels of the earth. They both placed a Flood at the beginning of history; they both assigned as the source of their traditions a primitive revelation; they both, finally, believed in the immortality of "the soul, in a last judgment, and in a resurrection of the dead, consequent upon a final conflagration of the universe.

We have seen that the theology of the Mysteries made of Mithra a "mediator" equivalent to the Alexandrian Logos. Like him, Christ also was...an intermediary between his celestial father and men, and like him he also was one of a trinity. These resemblances were certainly not the only ones that pagan exegesis established between the two religions, and the figure of the tauroctonous god reluctantly immolating his victim that he might create and save the human race, was certainly compared to the picture of the redeemer sacrificing his own person for the salvation of the world.

On the other hand, the ecclesiastical writers, reviving a metaphor of the prophet Malachi, contrasted the "Sun of justice" with the "invincible Sun," and consented to see in the dazzling orb which illuminated men a symbol of Christ, "the light of the world." Should we be astonished if the multitudes of devotees failed always to observe the subtle distinctions of the doctors, and if in obedience to a pagan custom they rendered to the radiant star of day the homage which orthodoxy reserved for God? In the fifth century, not only heretics, but even faithful

followers, were still wont to bow their heads toward its dazzling disc as it rose above the horizon, and to murmur the prayer, "Have mercy upon us."

The resemblances between the two hostile churches were so striking as to impress even the minds of antiquity. From the third century, the Greek philosophers were wont to draw parallels between the Persian Mysteries and Christianity which were evidently entirely in favor of the former. The Apologists also dwelt on the analogies between the two religions, and explained them as a Satanic travesty of the holiest rites of their religion. If the polemical works of the Mithraists had been preserved, we should doubtless have heard the same accusation hurled back upon their Christian adversaries.

We cannot presume to unravel to-day a question which divided contemporaries and which shall doubtless forever remain insoluble. We are too imperfectly acquainted with the dogmas and liturgies of Roman Mazdaism, as well as with the development of primitive Christianity, to say definitely what mutual influences were operative in their simultaneous evolution. But be this as it may, resemblances do not necessarily suppose an imitation. Many correspondences between the Mithraic doctrine and the Catholic faith are explicable by their common Oriental origin. Nevertheless, certain ideas and certain ceremonies must necessarily have passed from the one cult to the other; but in the majority of cases we rather suspect this transference than clearly perceive it.

Apparently the attempt was made to discern in the legend of the Iranian hero the counterpart of the life of Jesus, and the disciples of the Magi probably drew a direct contrast between the Mithraic worship of the shepherds, the Mithraic communion and ascension,

and those of the Gospels. The rock of generation, which had given birth to the genius of light, was even compared to the immovable rock, emblem of Christ, upon which the Church was founded; and the crypt in which the bull had perished was made the counterpart of that in which Christ is said to have been born at Bethlehem. But this strained parallelism could result in nothing but a caricature. It was a strong source of inferiority for Mazdaism that it believed in only a mythical redeemer. That unfailing wellspring of religious emotion supplied by the teachings and the passion of the God sacrificed on the cross, never flowed for the disciples of Mithra.

On the other hand, the orthodox and heretical liturgies of Christianity, which gradually sprang up during the first centuries of our era, could find abundant inspiration in the Mithraic Mysteries, which of all the pagan religions offered the most affinity with Christian institutions. We do not know whether the ritual of the sacraments and the hopes attaching to them suffered alteration through the influence of Mazdean dogmas and practices. Perhaps the custom of invoking the Sun three times each day, at dawn, at noon, and at dusk, was reproduced in the daily prayers of the Church, and it appears certain that the commemoration of the Nativity was set for the 25th of December, because it was at the winter solstice that the rebirth of the invincible god, the *Natalis invicti*, was celebrated. In adopting this date, which was universally distinguished by sacred festivities, the ecclesiastical authority purified in some measure the profane usages which it could not suppress.

The only domain in which we can ascertain in detail the extent to which Christianity imitated Mithraism is that of art. The Mithraic sculpture, which had been first developed, furnished the ancient Christian marble-

cutters with a large number of models, which they adopted or adapted. For example, they drew inspiration from the figure of Mithra causing the living waters to leap forth by the blows of his arrows, to create the figure of Moses smiting with his rod the rock of Horeb. Faithful to an inveterate tradition, they even reproduced the figures of cosmic divinities, like the Heavens and the Winds, the worship of which the new faith had expressly proscribed; and we find on the sarcophagi, in miniatures, and even on the portals of the Romance Churches, evidences of the influence exerted by the imposing compositions that adorned the sacred grottos of Mithra.

It would be wrong, however, to exaggerate the significance of these likenesses. If Christianity and Mithraism offered profound resemblances, the principal of which were the belief in the purification of souls and the hope of a beatific resurrection, differences no less essential separated them. The most important was the contrast of their relations to Roman paganism. The Mazdean Mysteries sought to "conciliate paganism by a succession of adaptations and compromises; they endeavored to establish monotheism while not combating it; polytheism, whereas the Church was, in point of principle, if not always in practice, the unrelenting antagonist of idolatry in any form. The attitude of Mithraism was apparently the wiser; it gave to the Persian religion greater elasticity and powers of adaptation, and it attracted toward the tauroctonous god all who stood in dread of a painful rupture with ancient traditions and contemporaneous society. The preference must therefore have been given by many to dogmas that satisfied their aspirations for greater purity and a better world, without compelling them to detest the faith of

> their fathers and the State of which they were citizens. As the Church grew in power despite its persecutors, this policy of compromise first assured to Mithraism much tolerance and afterward even the favor of the public authorities. But it also prevented it from freeing itself of the gross and ridiculous superstitions which complicated its ritual and its theology: it involved it, in spite of its austerity, in an equivocal alliance with the orgiastic cult of the beloved of Attis; and it compelled it to carry the entire weight of a chimerical and odious past. If Romanized Mazdaism had triumphed, it would not only have preserved from oblivion all the aberrations of pagan mysticism, but would also have perpetuated the erroneous doctrine of physics on which its dogmatism reposed. The Christian doctrine, which broke with the cults of nature, remained exempt from these impure associations, and its liberation from every compromising attachment assured it an immense superiority. Its negative value, its struggle against deeply-rooted prejudices, gained for it as many souls as did the positive hopes which it promised. It performed the miraculous feat of triumphing over the ancient world in spite of legislation and the imperial policy, and the Mithraic Mysteries were promptly abolished the moment the protection of the State was withdrawn and transformed into hostility.
>
> — (pages 190-199)

It can thus be seen that the similarities between Mithra and Christ begin with their baptism, go on to the ethics that they preached to twelve apostles, the salvation of human beings, the belief in a heaven, a hell and a resurrection, the fact that they are both intermediaries between the human being and God, and the worship of the Sun in early Christianity,

together with Jesus' birthday now replacing the birth date of Mithra, on 25 December of each year.[81]

Susan K. Roll, in *Toward the Origins of Christmas*, speaks of Usener's work on this subject. In the chapter 'The Invincible Sun and the Feast of Christ's Birth', of this book, she puts it thus:

> The Invincible Sun and the Feast of Christ's Birth
>
> 2.1.2 *Usener*
>
> A turning-point in the development of the hypothesis occurred with the 1889 publication of Hermann Usener's *Das Weihnachtsfest*. In a work which sprawls across a wide range of historical elements which formed the background of Epiphany and Christmas, Usener examines Christamas first from its institution in Cappadocia in order to fix a definite point in time at which it was celebrated, then moves backwards in time to Rome, then to its institution in Egypt and Jerusalem and its connection with Sol Invictus (drawing heavily on the sun symbolism visible in coins). Usener's proposals which would prove most provocative and most influential for a succession of researchers specifically concerning Christmas include:
>
> - The first celebration of Christmas in Antioch can be reliably dated to 388, according to Usener's

81. That 25 December could not possibly have been the birth date of Jesus is clear from the gospel account of his birth. Jesus was said to be born when shepherds tend their flocks by night (*see* Luke 2:8). Shepherds do not tend their flocks by night in winter in Israel—they can only do so in the summer months.

chronological schema of the sermons of John Chrysostom. In Cappadocia the split between Epiphany and Christmas had taken place by 378, and in Constantinople Christmas was celebrated first in 379.

- The feast of Christmas was established in Rome prece 354 C.E. by Pope Liberius (352-355.) His argument is based both on its listing in the 354 *Chronograph,* and on the evidence of a sermon then attributed to Liberius at the profession of religious vows of Marcellina, the sister of Ambrose. Usener held that at that point in the pontificate of Liberius the birth of Christ must have been celebrated on 6 January due to the coincidence in the sermon of the three themes of Christ's birth, the miracle at Cana and the multiplication of the loaves, since the latter two were typical Epiphany motifs. His conclusion was that 25 December was marked as the historical anniversary of Christ's birth, but that 6 January was celebrated as the feast day right up to the time of the *Chronograph*.
- Pope Liberius had founded the fourth Roman basilica, St. Mary Major, which became a repository for the 'true manger' and the stational church for the celebration of the Christmas Vigil, as a centerpoint for the new 25 December feast of Christ's birth.
- The church in this period pursued a conscious policy of not only converting non-Christians but keeping them contented as regards their traditional customs, which resulted in the arrogation of certain non-Christian festival dates and the adaptation of customs.
- Christmas did indeed represent a substitution or replacement for the feast of Natalis Solis

> Invicti. Usener refers to the notation in the 354 *Chronograph,* the *De solstitiis,* the note in Dionysius Bar-Salibi (1171), whom he identifies as "Jacob Bar-Salibi," and the Roman history of sun worship and the feast of Sol Invictus partly extrapolated from Usener's examination of Roman coins, and the (controverted) testimony in Hippolytus' *Commentary on Daniel*.
>
> — (pages 131-133)

Cumont, in his other great book, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, states that when Rome extended her conquests to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, the influence of Persia became much more direct (*see* page 139). In an interesting passage, Cumont states that Mithra was commonly called *sol invictus* in the Roman mysteries (*see* page 146). The spread of Mithraism with lightning rapidity from the time that it was first introduced, is then spoken of, the spread taking place among Roman soldiers along the entire length of the frontiers of Rome by the end of the first century AD. One very good reason as to why it spread among the Roman soldiers is stated by Cumont as follows:

> Mithra, the ancient spirit of light, became the god of truth and justice in the religion of Zoroaster and retained that character in the Occident. He was the Macdean Apollo, but while Hellenism, with a finer appreciation of beauty, developed the esthetic qualities in Apollo, the Persians, caring more for matters of conscience, emphasized the moral character in Mithra. The Greeks, themselves little scrupulous in that respect, were struck by the abhorrence in which their Oriental neighbors held a lie. The Persians conceived of Ahriman as the embodiment of deceit. Mithra was always the

> god invoked as the guarantor of faith and protector of the inviolability of contracts. Absolute fidelity to his oath had to be a cardinal virtue in the religion of a soldier, whose first act upon enlistment was to pledge obedience and devotion to the sovereign. This religion exalted loyalty and fidelity and undoubtedly tried to inspire a feeling similar to our modern idea of honor. In addition to respect for authority it preached fraternity. All the initiates considered themselves as sons of the same father owing to one another a brother's affection. It is a question whether they extended the love of neighbor to that universal charity taught by philosophy and Christianity. Emperor Julian, a devoted mystic, liked to set up such an ideal, and it is probable that the Mithraists of later paganism rose to this conception of duty, but they were not its authors. They seemed to have attached more importance to the virile qualities than to compassion and gentleness. The fraternal spirit of initiates calling themselves soldiers was doubtless more akin to the spirit of comradeship in a regiment that has esprit de corps, than to the love of one's neighbor that inspires works of mercy towards all.
>
> — (pages 155-156)

However, Cumont is not without his detractors. For example—Wikander does not find anything in Roman Mithraism which has or can be traced to a Zoroastrian origin. This is supported by R. L. Gordon in his article, 'Franz Cumont and the Doctrines of Mithraism'. One learned author, A. D. H. Bivar, in an article titled, 'Mithra and Mesopotamia', reasons that Roman Mithraism goes back to Babylon and not Persia. However, Professor John Hinnells, in an article titled, 'Reflections on the Bull Slaying Scene', has this to say on the dispute as to Roman Mithraism's Persian origins:

What, then, do the reliefs depict? And how can we proceed in any study of Mithraism? I would accept with R. Gordon that Mithraic scholars must in future start with the Roman evidence, not by outlining Zoroastrian myths and then making the Roman iconography fit that scheme. Nevertheless, we would not be justified in swinging to the opposite extreme from Cumont and Campbell and denying *all* connection between Mithraism and Iran. There are a number of fairly clear pointers to an Iranian origin for the Roman cult: the name of the god; the title of the fifth grade (Persian); the use of the Iranian *Nabarzes, Cautopates* and *nama;* and finally the belief of the contemporary writers that Mithraism was a Persian cult, from Statius, who refers to 'Mithra as beneath the rocks of the Persian cave he presses back the horns that resist his control', to Origen, who writes of 'the Mithraic mysteries of the Persians', and Firmicus Maternus, who says of the Persians, 'To him they give the name of Mithra, and celebrate his rites in secret caves…when you affirm, therefore, that in the temples the Magian rites are duly performed after the Persian ceremonial, why do you confine your approval to these Persian rites alone, if you think it not derogatory to the Roman name to adopt Persian cults and Persian laws? It may be that these 'pointers' are merely superficial trappings given by a creator of the cult to cloak his invention with the exotic appeal the East is known to have held for many Romans, and specifically with the attraction of the ancient Iranian prophet (see R. Gordon, p. 245). This is a possible explanation of the cult's genesis, but there is no more tangible evidence for the existence of such a creator than there is for a Zoroastrian or Iranian background. Unless we discover Euboulus' history of Mithraism we are never likely to have conclusive proof for any theory. Perhaps all that can

> be hoped for is a theory which is in accordance with the evidence and commends itself by (mere) plausibility. The ensuing discussion is an attempt to uncover a plausible Iranian origin for Mithraism which accounts for the available Roman iconographic evidence which has been discussed. Without doubt, the search for the origins of Mithraism has in the past dominated the subject too much, but unless one proceeds on the assumption that Mithraism was a consciously new creation, then Iran will remain a part of the jigsaw puzzle we are seeking to reconstruct—perhaps a smaller part than previously thought, but a necessary part nevertheless. When the Roman material has been analysed a consideration of ancient Iranian material may still be essential, although careful consideration has to be given to the question of how ideas are affected by their transplantation from one culture to another.
>
> — (pages 303-304)

The learned author then goes on to state:

> The general theory and practice of ancient Iranian religion thus appear to have been of such a nature that it could have given rise to the Roman reliefs depicting a sacrificial ritual scene. It may also be worth noting a number of detailed parallels between the reliefs and Iranian ritual. In each case offerings of round, flat loaves, fruit, wine, water and the head of a sacrificial animal are made. As the Father played the part of Mithras in the community ritual meal and the god may be thought to be spiritually present in him, so Haoma may be presumed to be spiritually present during the yasna. Mithras' act of averting his gaze from his deed has often puzzled interpreters. Perhaps the motive is similar to that of the priest who kisses the sacrificial animal as an act of

> contrition for slaying a brother of the Good Creation. As the dog on the Roman monuments leaps to receive the shed eternal blood, so in the *Mihragan* a dog is the first to receive the pure portions of the sacrifice. It is, finally, very interesting that as the Mithraic devotees dressed up in animal masks, so in the *Mihragan* such masks are still used. Not all these parallels are of equal significance, nor do they all carry the same degree of conviction, and, taken alone, would not amount to anything that might be considered convincing evidence of the Iranian background of Mithraism. However, in the light of the earlier consideration of the association of Mithra with animal and specifically bull sacrificial rituals in ancient Iran, it may be considered plausible that some of these details on Roman monuments represent archaic survivals of ancient Iranian ideas whose significance may no longer have been appreciated.
>
> — (pages 308-309)

The learned author then concludes:

> Mithraic art thus preserves ancient Iranian ideas of sacrifice and salvation but not expressed through Iranian motifs. The motifs and imagery of Mithraic monuments were drawn from the contemporary world of Graeco-Roman symbolism. Cumont, I am arguing, looked at the symbols and not at what they symbolised. What is Iranian about Mithraism is not the art but the idea, the idea of salvation through the divine priestly act, an idea acceptable in the Graeco-Roman world, which is presumably why it was so successfully propagated there. It has been said, with justice, that the great problem of Mithraic studies is the question of continuity and discontinuity between the Eastern and Western traditions. In a different context, K.

> Stendahl has commented shrewdly on 'the puzzling insight that in the living religious traditions continuity is affirmed and achieved by discontinuity'. Mithraism was a living faith in the Roman empire because it now raises this problem for scholars. The ancient traditions were adapted, modified and expressed in the light of contemporary ideas: ancient Iranian ideas of animal sacrifice were made meaningful to the Roman devotees.
>
> — (pages 311-312)

A reading of the above scholastic material would clearly go to show the Persian origins of the cult of the Roman Mithras, which challenged Christianity, and may have supplanted Christianity as the religion of Rome in the fourth century AD had Julian the Apostate (whose reign lasted from 361 AD to 363 AD) not been killed, paradoxically, in a battle with the Persians. A reading of the aforesaid materials would show that it is R. C. Zaehner's painstaking research that has delved, in great detail, into Zoroastrian texts to arrive at a conclusion as to the Persian, if not wholly Zoroastrian, origin of the Roman Mithras. We must thank Franz Cumont for the interesting parallels drawn between Mithraism as practiced in the fourth century AD and Christianity, and how despite its ultimate defeat, Christianity draws, particularly in its ritualistic aspects, from the older religion. Just how powerful Mithraism must have been in the fourth century AD in the Roman Empire is signified both by the Christian Eucharist or the symbolic eating of the blood and body of Christ, with the symbolic eating of the blood and body of the slain bull by the followers of Mithra. Saturday, the Jewish day of the Sabbath, is replaced by Sunday or the day dedicated to Mithra as *sol invictus*; and the ultimate replacement is the

festival celebrating Mithra's birthday on 25 December, with Christmas, as we know it, being the great world festival celebrating Jesus's birthday in the place of Mithra.

Chapter VI

Zoroastrianism and Buddhism

But for the extensive studies of G. K. Nariman, my illustrious forebear, one would never have thought that Zoroastrianism, a most positive and forward-looking faith, if there was ever one, would possibly have had any influence on Buddhism, which though it preaches roughly the same ethics in its eight-fold path as the holy triad of Zoroastrianism – good thoughts, good words and good deeds – begins from the diametric opposite of Zarathustra's views. Zarathustra speaks of the earth as *ranyo skeretim*, i.e. joy giving, and speaks of the doing of good and the fighting of evil. Buddhism, on the other hand, emphasises suffering and makes suffering its starting point. Both religions, however, believe in non-violence.

G. K. Nariman traces the holy Zoroastrian triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds through various Buddhist texts. His article is, therefore, set out in full:

Buddhist Parallels to Humata—Hukhta—Huvarshta.

His thought is quiet, quiet are his word and deed, when he has obtained freedom by true knowledge, when he has thus become a quiet man.

Commenting on this verse of the PALI DHAMMAPADA, Max Muller proceeds to show that "this very natural threefold division, thought, word and deed, the *trividha-dvara*, or the three doors of the Buddhists, was not peculiar to the Buddhists or unknown to the Brâhmans", and somewhat lukewarmly adds that "similar expressions have been shown to exist in the Zend-Avesta". (S. B. E., X, 28.) - (The reference to Hardy's Manual will be found at page 513 of the second edition. Max Muller's p. 494 refers probably to the first ed.)

That good thought, word and deed are of the essence of Zarathustrianism is a commonplace of comparative religion, and the Parsis rightly glory in this tenet of paramount ethical importance. What I would call attention to is that it is possible to exaggerate the value of this doctrine as an ethical asset peculiar to the Parsis and confined more or less to the doctrines of the Avesta alone. On the contrary, it is inculcated with almost equal insistence in the younger Vedic literature and the Brahman scriptures and the Buddhist writings. (A. Weber: *Indische Streifen* I, 209. Brunnhofer: *Urgeschichte der Arier* I, 192 *seq.* Tiele: *Geschichte der Religion im Alterthum* II, 330).

It seems to me that the frequency with which this triad is alluded to, and the wealth of variety of manner in which it is emphasised in the Buddhist sacred books, deserves to be better studied by those who are misleading the Parsis that their Avestaic *humata hukhta huvarshta* is a spiritual monopoly all their own.

I will only premise that the citations here produced are but a fraction of what can be produced and that they were ticked off in a fresh hurried re-reading of a few Pali and Sanskrit Buddhistic works. I have quoted the setting and the context at certain length

so as not to deprive the originals by truncation of their rugged unconventional attractions. It would be easy to compose quite a charming little anthology of Buddhism merely by stringing together those passages which are instinct with the spirit of thought, speech and act that are good.

Him I call indeed a Brahman who does not offend by body, word or thought, and is controlled on all these three points."

— DHAMMAPADA: 391.

Even if he commit a sinful deed by his body or in word or in thought he is incapable of concealing it; for to conceal is said to be impossible for one that has seen the state of Nirvåna. This excellent jewel is found in the Assembly, by this truth may there be salvation.

— SUTTANIPATA, CHULAVAGGA: 11.

He who is not opposed to any one in word, thought or deed, who after having understood the Dharma perfectly longs for the state of Nirvana, - such a one will wander rightly in the world.

SUTTANIPATA,
— SAMMAPARIBBAJANIYASUTTA: 7.

And in which way is it, Siha, that one speaking truly could say of me: "The Samana Gotama denies action; he teaches the doctrine of non-action; and in this doctrine he trains his disciples?" I teach, Siha, the not-doing of such actions as are unrighteous either by deed or by word or by thought; I teach the not - bringing about of the manifold conditions of heart which are evil and not good. In this way, Siha, one speaking truly could say

of me "The Samana Gotama denies action"..... I teach Siha, the doing of such actions as are righteous by word or by thought.

— VINAYA PITAKA MAHAVAGGA: VI, 31, 6.

I deem, Siha, unrighteous actions contemptible whether they be performed by deed or by word or by thought; I proclaim the doctrine of the contemptibleness of falling into the manifold conditions of the heart which are evil and not good.

— MAHAVAGGA: VI, 31,7.

I teach, Siha, that all the conditions of heart which are evil and not good, unrighteous actions by deed, by word and by thought must be burnt away.

— MAHAVAGGA: VI, 31, 8.

And what is it that gives rise to legal questions of offence? There are six origins of offence that give rise to legal questions of offence. There is an offence that originates in deed, but not in word nor in thought (and so on till all the possible combinations are exhausted with mathematical precision after the approved Buddhist method).

— CHULLAVAGGA: IV, 14, 6.

A Bhikshu who warns another should, Upali, when he is about to do so consider thus: "Am I pure in the conduct of my body, pure therein without a flaw, without a fleck? Is this quality found in me or is it not?" If, Upali, the Bhikshu is not so, there will be some who will say to him: "Come, now, let your reverence continue still to train yourself in matters relating to the body"- thus will

they say. The same exhortation is repeated separately with reference to speech and mind.)

— CHULLAVAGGA: IX, 5, 1.

And was not Shariputra the Elder, O king, the best man in the whole ten thousand world systems, the Teacher of the world, himself alone excepted? And he who through endless ages had heaped up merit and had been reborn in a Brahman family, relinquished all the delights of the pleasures of senses, and gave up boundless wealth, to enter the Order according to the teaching of the Conqueror, and having restrained his actions, words and thoughts, by these thirteen vows became in this life of such exalted virtue that he was the one who, after the Master, set rolling on the royal chariot - wheel of the Kingdom of Righteousness in the religion of Gotama, the Blessed One.

— MILINDA PINHA: end of Ch. IX.

Through the merits of good theories virtuous men who understand noble knowledge go to heavenly worlds from their self-restraint as regards body, speech and thought.

— BUDDHACHARITA: XVI, 25.

But all they who do good with their body, who do good with their voice, who do good with their mind, they love themselves.

And although they should say thus: "We do not love ourselves", nevertheless they do love themselves. And why do I say so? Because whatever a man would do to one whom he loved, that they do to themselves. Therefore, they love themselves.

— SAMYUTTA - NIKAYA: iii, 1, 4.

Suppose, O Monks, one does evil with his body, does evil with his voice, does evil with his mind.....

— ANGUTTARA-NIKAYA: iii 35.

Permit me, Lord, give me absolution from all my faults committed in deed or word or thought.

— PORTION OF BUDDHIST CONFESSION.

So it appears, O Monks, that ye are distressed at, ashamed of, and loathe the idea of life in heavenly beauty, heavenly happiness, heavenly glory ; that ye are distressed at, ashamed of and loathe the idea of heavenly power. But much more, O Monks, should ye be distressed at, ashamed of and loathe doing evil with the body ... with the voice... with the mind.

— ANGUTTARA-NIKAYA: iii, 18.

As everything he did in thought, speech and action was purified by his love, most of the animals given to wickedness were like his pupils and friends.

— JATAKAMALA: VI, 3.

But the lack of mercy is to men the cause of the greatest disturbance, as it corrupts the action of their minds and words and bodies no less with respect to their families than to strangers.

— JATAKAMALA: XXVI, 40.

All that we are is the result of what we have thought. It is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.

— DHAMMAPADA: 2.

From thought, I say, proceeds deed; after having thought, a man puts into effect a noble speech or act.

— ANGUTTARA-NIKAYA: Vol. iii, 415.

In deed was I well-behaved, so in words, so in thoughts; all thirst is finally quenched: extinguished I am; all put out.

— UTTARA's SONG: THERIGATHA.

Those who weary of the three perfections (pradhana) and their accompaniment, become hermits and (take up) cool dwelling places, their bodies, speech and minds all well controlled, knowing the proper way to comfort themselves; - they are truly Bhikshus.

BUDDHIST SUTRAS FROM THE TIBETAN
— INDIAN ANTIQUARY, 1883, p. 308.

Steadily observing the tenfold way of virtuous action in body, speech and thought, and turning away from spirituous liquors, you will feel a sincere joy in this virtuous life. THE SUHRILLEKHA, the epistle of Nagarjuna to king Udayana, (Journal of the Pali Text Society, 1886).

Since then you must die in this manner (in uncertainty as to your fate) take the lamp of the Three merits to give you light, for alone you must enter their endless darkness which is untouched by sun or moon.

Commentary: The three kinds of merits are those of body, speech and thought.

— SUHRILLEKHA: p. 21.

A monk kills a wild goose and is reprimanded with a sermon ending in "A Brother ought to hold himself in control in deed, word and thought."

— JATAKA: No. 276.

Le Buddha a enonce comment du corps, de la bouche, et des pensees decoulent les trois sortes de Karmans.

—Huber's French translation of the Chinese version of KUMARJIVA's SUTRALAMKARA from the original Sanskrit of ASIVAGHOSHA.

Tinimani bhikkhave moneyyani. Katamani tini? Kayamoneyyam vachimoneyyam manomoneyyam.

ITIVUTTAKA 64, quoted by Minayefl in his *Recherches sur le Buddhisme*; see also his next note from the ABHIDHARMA-KOSHAVYAKHYA.

त्रविधिम् का यकिं कर्म वचसाच चतुर्वधिम् ।
मनसा त्रप्रिकारेण तत्सर्व देशया म्यहम् ॥
कायकृतं वाचकृतं मनसा च वचिन्तितिम् ।
कृतं दशवधि कर्म तत्सर्व देशयाम्यहम् ॥

— CIKSHASAMUCCAYA, p. 163.

It is not possible, O Monks, it is without a foundation that one with good thoughts, words and deeds should have a fortune undesirable, joyless and cheerless.

— ANGUTTARA-NIKAYA: EKA NIPATA: 20.

Les trois occupations sont celles ducorps (kaya-karma), de la bouche (vag-karma), et de la pensee (citta-karma).

— CHAVANNES : *Voyages des pelerins Bouddhistes* : p. 171.

Samanna-phala Sutta, etc. translated by Rhys Davids in his "Dialogues of the Buddha", pp. 57-8, 72, 103, 202, 221, 269, 279.

Seydel notes this "astonishing similarity" and refers to Lalita Vistara, Chap. 5, and to the Chinese Sutra of the 42 Articles.

— SEYDEL: *Evangelium von Jesu in seinem verhalt nissen zu Buddhasage und Buddha-Lehre*: pp. 202, 213.

And I know that those beings possest of good conduct in body, speech and mind, not upbraiding the elect ones, but right believers, incurring the karma' of right belief, rise again, upon the dissolution of the body after death — some in the world of wealth and paradise, and some among the human ; while those beings possest of bad conduct in body, speech and mind, upbraiders of the elect ones, false believers, incurring the karma of false belief, do rise again, upon the dissolution of the body after death, either in the realm of ghosts or in wombs brutes, or in the damnation, woe and perdition of hell.

"O soul, through thoughtlessness thou didst not right in body, speech and mind. Verily, O soul, they shall do to thee according to thy thoughtlessness. Moreover, this wickedness was not done by mother or father, brother or sister, friends or companions, relatives or kinsfolk; neither by philosophers, Brahmins or spirits: by thee the wickedness was done, and thou alone shalt fool its consequences."

— MAJJHIMA NIKAYA: 130.

RANGOON.

— G. K. NARIMAN."

Where Zoroastrianism meets up with a religion like Buddhism is on the famous Silk Route, which starts out from Palestine, goes through the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan and Tibet, and finally lands up in China. Kings such as Kanishka and Kadphises of the Kushan dynasty, which ruled from 30 BC to around 375 AD, bear testimony to this. The coins of these rulers showed that they were adherents to both these religions. It is more than likely that it is along the Silk Route that the older Zoroastrian ideas, most notably the famous holy triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, were imparted to Buddhist monks and hence entered the Buddhist Canon, as has been pointed out in this article.

Chapter VII

Two Persian Prophets—Mani and Mazdak

Mani was a prophet who emerged in the Sasanian Empire and preached at the time of the second Sasanian Emperor, Shapur I. Shapur I was a great conqueror who defeated three Roman emperors, having captured and killed one of them—Emperor Valerian. (The other two that were defeated and subjugated were Marcus Julius Philippus, also known as 'the Arab', and Gordian III). Though Shapur I was a staunch Zoroastrian, Mani's teachings, which combined the elements of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity, were tolerated. This continued with the subsequent ruler, Hormuz I, but at the time of Bahram I, the Zoroastrian clergy had its way and the chief priest, Kartir, had Mani put to death. Manichaeism spread both Eastwards and Westwards, having great influence on gnostic Christianity. The Cathars and the Albigensians were gnostics who followed Mani's teachings.

Since Mani's life and works are well explained by Richard Foltz in *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present*, and by A. V. W. Jackson in *Researches in Manichaeism*, extracts from both these books will bring into bold relief Mani's own self-avowed reliance on Zoroastrianism, in his new religion.

Richard Foltz in Chapter 10 of his book says this about Mani's teachings:

> Within the exceptionally rich hybrid religious atmosphere of third-century Mesopotamia arose what would for a thousand years be one of the major world religions, but which by the fortunes of history is no longer practiced by anyone in the world today. This was Manichaeism, perhaps the most maligned religion in history. For centuries it was known only through the polemics of its worst enemies, such as Augustine of Hippo in the Christian tradition and the various heresiographers and historians of Islam. Byzantine writers derisively termed it a "mania," punning on the founder's name, Mani. Even Chinese sources dismissed Manichaeism as a sect of "vegetarian demon-worshipers".
>
> Yet for all the venomous attacks of its adversaries, Manichaeism must be ranked as one of the most influential religions in history, if for no other reason than that its proselytizing successes and extreme doctrinal positions forced apologists for other faiths to refine and strengthen their own views. It was largely opposition to the explosive popularity of Manichaeism that energized the Zoroastrian magi to lobby so aggressively for their own religion's official status in the Sasanian Empire. Augustine was a Manichaean for nine years before converting to Christianity, and his interpretation of the latter faith was greatly influenced by his rejection of the former. The resurgence of Manichaean tendencies during the High Caliphate of Islam in the late eighth century, particularly within the Persian bureaucracy, stimulated the active responses of Islamic theologians.
>
> Perhaps the most significant impact of Manichaeism on competing faith traditions was the idea that a religion

is defined by its scriptural canon. Indeed, John C. Reeves suggests that:

> Manichaeism may well be the earliest example of what Islam will later term a "people of the Book", i.e. a scripturally based religious community. . . It does not seem far-fetched to view Mani's authorial efforts as catalytic in the eventual determination of the physical content and conceptual boundaries of Jewish, Christian, and even Zoroastrian scripture.
>
> It should be recalled that when Manichaeism arose in the third century CE, the canons of these other traditions had not yet been established.
> (*See* Chapter 10)

The learned author goes on to discuss the life of this Prophet and his travels; the fact that like Jesus, he was able to perform miracles; and finally, his gruesome death in prison at the age of 60, as follows:

> Mani, the prophet and founder of Manichaeism, was born in Mesopotamia in 216 CE, of parents who had originated from Parthia. At the tender age of four Mani was taken to live with his father in an all-male religious commune of Elchasaites, one of the numerous Judeo–Christian baptist sects that existed in Mesopotamia at the time, whose traditions may be traced to those of the ancient Qumran community in Palestine. Mani, visited by his "cosmic twin"—an ancient Indo-European idea, as discussed in preceding chapters— received his first revelation at the age of twelve. At twenty-four he received another, which led him to see himself as the Paraclete (the twin) of Jesus and inspired him to embark on his worldwide mission.

Inspired by the example of the apostle Thomas, for whom he felt a special affinity—having apparently read the Hymn of the Pearl which is found in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas—in the year 240 Mani set off to Sind in north-western India. There, he is said to have converted a local Buddhist ruler to his new religion. By performing a number of "miracles," Mani appears to have persuaded the ruler that he was an incarnation of the Buddha. Indeed, as for many religious figures of the time, miracle-working would be a major factor in attracting the masses to Mani's religion. Matthew Canepa notes in this regard that "Like Jesus and the Buddha, whom Mani considered his heralds and predecessors, Mani performed many miracles, healings and exorcisms which religious and political adherents and opponents each defined differently as magical or religious according to their polemical bent."

Returning to Iran two years later, Mani found an audience with two princes of the newly established Sasanian dynasty. The king, Shapur I, was sufficiently impressed by Mani's charisma that he granted him the freedom to spread his teaching throughout Iran. Later in his career Mani composed his sole work in (Middle) Persian, the Šābūragān, in honour of the Sasanian monarch. This text, which Mani claimed as the authentic teaching of Zoroaster, together with his apparent popularity at court, provoked the jealousy of the Zoroastrian magi, led by their chief priest, Kerdir. The two remained rivals until the accession of Vahram I in 273, after which Kerdir succeeded in getting Mani expelled from favor, perhaps on the pretext of Mani's failure to heal an ailing princess. Mani died in prison in 276, presumably tortured to death, at the age of sixty.

— (*See* Chapter 10)

The spread of Manichaeism after the death of the Prophet and its eventual demise, relatively soon thereafter, is then described as under:

> The new ruler, goaded by Kerdir, launched a major persecution of Manichaeans. As a result of this a number of them fled to Sogdian Central Asia where Mani's chief missionary, Mar Ammo, had already spread their teaching. (Sogdian Manichaeans would later bring the religion to China.) Simultaneously, to the west, the Arab ruler of Hira offered them protection, facilitating the spread of Manichaeism into North Africa. From there the religion began to work its way across the Roman Empire, where it raised the alarm of Emperor Diocletian. In 302 the Emperor issued an edict against the religion as a corrupt teaching of Rome's Persian enemies:
>
> > We have heard that the Manichaeans … have set up new and hitherto unheard of sects in opposition to older creeds so that they might cast out the doctrines vouchsafed to us in the past by divine favour—for the benefit of their own depraved doctrine. They have sprung forth very recently like new and unexpected monstrosities among the race of the Persians—a nation still hostile to us—and have made their way into our empire, where they are committing many outrages, disturbing the tranquillity of the people and even inflicting grave damage to the civic communities: our fear is that with the passage of time, they will endeavour, as usually happens, to infect the modest and tranquil Roman people of an innocent nature with the damnable customs and the perverse laws of the Persians as with the poison of a malignant serpent …

By comparison with other figures considered to be founders of major religions, Mani's career appears exceptionally deliberate and successful. Rather than dismiss previous religions as "false," he claimed that they contained truth but had been corrupted. Thus, he was a keen student of other religions and took from each what he found appropriate. Mani claimed to be a perfecter of Christianity, but his understanding of Jesus differed dramatically from that found in any Christian sect. He took from Iranian religion its light–dark symbolism, its ethical dualism and much of its cosmic hierarchy, along with the commandment not to lie, but challenged the legalistic authority of the Zoroastrian priestly class, the magi. From Indian traditions he borrowed the principle of non-injury, a belief in reincarnation, the notion of good deeds acquiring merit, and the quadripartite social structure of monastic and lay men and women. The Manichaean ideal of worldly poverty was common to both the Christian and Buddhist–Jaina ascetic traditions. Mani taught Gnostic ideas such as the pairing of humans with their heavenly twins and the goal of ascension to a spiritual realm of light.

Mani saw himself as the fourth in a line of "apostles," after Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus. His approach could be considered intentionally syncretistic, subsuming and subordinating the teachings of earlier religious figures. As he states in the Kephalaia:

> The writings and the wisdom and the revelations and the parables and the psalms of all the first churches have been collected in every place. They have come down to my church. They have added the wisdom that I have revealed, the way water might add to water and become many waters. Again, this is also the way that the ancient books have added to my writings, and have become great wisdom; its

like was not uttered in all the generations. They did not write nor did they unveil the books the way that I, I have written it.

* * *

Virtually stamped out in the Roman Empire and vigorously persecuted by the Sasanians, Manichaeism moved east along the Silk Roads. Its main purveyors, as had been the case with Buddhism and Christianity, were Iranian (mainly Sogdian) merchants and monks who travelled with them. All three religions, lacking state sponsorship in many or most cases, relied heavily on the economic support of their respective monasteries which were located along the trade routes. Manichaean communities took hold in such places as Samarkand and further east in the Tarim basin (what is now western China), beyond the easy reach first of the Sasanians and then the Muslims. The formal head of the Manichaean church, referred to as the Archegos, remained based at Baghdad until the early tenth century when he fled to Samarkand during an anti-Manichaean clampdown under the Muslim Caliph Muqtadir.

Manichaeism enjoyed one stint as official religion, under a state established by Uighur Turks in Central Asia from 763–840, and under some smaller remnant Uighur kingdoms for two and a half centuries after that. Otherwise Manichaeans remained a distrusted minority wherever they were, from Iran to China, often outwardly professing to be good Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, or Taoists. The last Manichaean community appears to have survived in south-eastern China into the seventeenth century, when it became unrecognizably absorbed into popular Buddhism.

— (*See* Chapter 10)

In A. V. W. Jackson's Book, *Researches in Manichaeism*, the Manichaean religion is fleshed out in greater detail, as follows:

> The religion of Mānī, as noted above, was distinctly and designedly a synthesis. Among his spiritual predecessors he especially acknowledged Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus as pioneer revealers of the truth which he came to fulfil. He accounted Zoroaster's dualistic doctrine of the fundamental struggle between light and darkness, soul and matter, to be at [the] basis [of] the solution of the problem of good and evil. He found in the teachings of the gentle Buddha certain lessons for the conduct of life to be accepted everywhere by mankind. He recognized in Jesus a verified ideal and claimed to be the Paraclete promised by Christ and for whom the world was seeking. Ideas such as these he supplemented by Indian and especially Buddhistic traits, combined with old Babylonian beliefs that survived among the Mandaeans along the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates, together with marked Hellenistic Gnostic features, all of which were current in the atmosphere of his time. This eclectic character of Mānī's religion, and the coloring by the faiths with which he came in contact, made the new creed easier of adoption, and his followers were later able, if necessary, to pass themselves off as a sect of one or other of the religious communities among which they spread their Master's teachings. In the West, for example, the Christian elements tended to be more strongly emphasized, in the East certain Buddhistic elements came perhaps more to the front, but at the basis of Mānī's conception of the universe lay the old-time Persian doctrine of dualism, taught centuries earlier by Zoroaster, but amplified, modified, and above all spiritualized by Mānī.

Like Zoroaster, he postulated the existence of Two Principles from the beginning to eternity. To Mānī, Light was synonymous with spirit and good, Darkness with matter and evil. This was a fundamental tenet of the faith. As a second cardinal doctrine, he recognized three Ages in the history of beginningless and endless time; they are called 'The Three Times,' that is, the primordial, intermediate, and final. In the first age, before this visible world came into existence, the Two Principles were wholly separate, Light above, Darkness below; in the second, the present age, they became commingled in a universal conflict; in the third dispensation, which is to come, they will be separated once more through the triumph of Light and the relegation of Darkness to its dismal abode forever.

Mānī's speculations regarding the primordial status of the universe were highly imaginative. The two Principles of Light and Darkness constituted two totally opposing realms, each existing from eternity and each presided over by a sovereign ruler. The domain of Light extended infinitely upward, that of Darkness infinitely downward. Each was independent and separate, but they were contiguous to one another over a surface of infinite expanse in all lateral directions, which was styled the 'Border.' In the luminous domain, exalted above its lowest bright region, called the 'Light Earth,' and the intermediate region, 'Light Air,' there reigned in serenity 'the Good Ruler of the Realm of Light' in his four aspects as Deity, Light, Power, and Wisdom. Zarvan, or Time Eternal, he was called by Mānī, although other titles also were given him to denote both his majesty and his nature as the Father God of Light. His splendor was shared by his fivefold Realms, or Aeons, and by twelve personified abstractions, Majesties or Sovereignties, all of which were transcendentally either members of

his spiritual being or one with him in mystic union. Countless celestial forms, as minor divinities, angels, and spirits, likewise thronged the luminous domain, but all were manifestations of the Supreme Light.

The Realm of Darkness, synonymous with its own Principle, was conceived of as evil and as material in its essence. From the very nature of its dark Principle there came into being an Overlord, a diabolical figure corresponding to the Persian Ahriman, and often so called in the Manichaean Pahlavi texts, together with myriads of demons that filled the nether domain in wild confusion. Out of the prevailing tumult and disorder came to pass the first disturbance in the static condition of the universe. The powers of Darkness broke upward through the dividing expanse, upon whose surface the two realms touched, and invaded the domain of Light. The fateful conflict began; the first age was at an end, and the second age, with its direful struggle and momentous events, was ushered in.

To repel the onslaught of Darkness the Godhead, or Father of Light and Greatness, called two spiritual agents into being; 'evoked' (not generated) is the true Manichaean word for this act, since Mānī never employed any term that would imply the idea of sexual generation in the transcendental Realm of Light. By this first evocation the Mother of Life and then Primal Man were summoned into existence. Primal Man was not Adam but a celestial prototype to foreshadow him. Armed with the five original elements of the Light Realm in their ethereal form, which he himself had evoked as his sons and panoply, this protagonist was sent to do battle against the powers of Darkness. At first their superior forces overwhelmed him, 'swallowing' a part of his armor of Light and leaving him worsted and senseless as a result of the initial fray.

Thereupon the Father called forth, as a second evocation, three other luminous agents, the third of these figures in Manichaeism being particularly well known as the Spiritus Vivens or Living Spirit. The second, the Great Architect, was the designer of the future Paradise, but not a participant in the rescue of Primal Man. The first, or Friend of Light, was a helpful pioneer in the rescue. He led the way and loosened the captive from the bonds of Darkness, while the Living Spirit joined with the Mother of Life in bringing back the imprisoned one to the celestial heights. But the light which Primal Man had lost in the battle had become mixed with darkness, through being devoured by the demoniacal powers. To effect the release of these robbed and imprisoned luminous elements the Father, acting through his previously evoked agents, caused the visible world, the macrocosm, to be created through a highly complicated process.

Mānī's fancy sought to depict this process of formation in terms of an elaborate cosmogony. The Living Spirit, as demiurge (creator) or active agent, assisted by his five sons whom he himself had in turn 'evoked,' served as the one above all divinely delegated to bring this to pass. The Mother of Life also joined in the task. The Archons, or Regents of Darkness, were seized, chained, and flayed. Ten heavens were made of their outstretched skins which overspread the firmament. Eight earths were constructed from their huge carcasses, while the sun and the moon were composed out of the purest substances of light won back from them. The stars were formed from the sparkling particles that still remained. All these celestial bodies were set in motion to aid in extracting the lost light that was mixed in darkness. The sun and the moon functioned permanently in this process, the Milky Way and the constellations of the

Zodiac likewise actively participated. Then the three 'wheels' of the wind, fire, and water were made, and set in motion.

The Supreme Being (Father of Light) now had recourse to a third evocation, the Third Messenger, who embodied certain traits of the ancient Persian sun-god, Mithra. By a weird conceit, his radiant figure was represented in one aspect as assuming a bi-sexual form, the beauty of which seduced the male and female Archons alike. The seed of the former fell as rain upon the earth, from which vegetable life sprang up; abortive forms cast by the self-pregnant females gave rise to animals. It is no wonder that the Church Fathers anathematized these fabulous stories of Mānī as obscene. Yet each of these two classes of inanimate and animate creations contained elements of the imprisoned light, the plants above all.

In the production of the human species the demoniacal forces played not an involuntary part but an active role of their own wicked designing, the creation of the two sexes being especially the work of the Evil One. His fiendish aim was by this means to incarcerate the light perpetually in the bonds of the carnal body. Mankind, the microcosm, was made by the Dark Powers as an exact reproduction of the double nature of the macrocosm, or physical universe, according to Mānī's teachings, though man, despite his origin, was similarly subject to a process whereby the luminous portions of his being should be released. Our first parents were demon-born, offspring of the execrated union of the Arch-Fiend and his mate. In Adam, however, the luminous particles predominated, while Eve was composed wholly of dark elements. A fantastic distortion of the Biblical narrative, mixed up with other sources, recounts the story of the fall of man and of the early succeeding generations of

the human family, for the purpose of showing the evil of fleshly intercourse and the begetting of children. Only through a life of renunciation, ascetic in its rigor, are perfection and redemption to be obtained. Divinely inspired messengers (such as Zoroaster and Buddha) have pointed out the way in part. Jesus is recognized by Mānī as his own direct predecessor.

To Mānī, the true Jesus was the 'Luminous Jesus,' the first member of a triad, apparently called forth in transcendental form by the Father of Light and thought of as a fourth evocation, the other members being the Maiden of Light and the Great Manuhmed. When the visible world was brought into existence, this wholly celestial being was divinely sent to Adam in order to 'awaken' him from his lethargic sleep which involved sin and death. He gave Adam the knowledge of good and evil and vouchsafed him a vision of heaven, besides revealing his own celestial Jesusself as identical with the light that was now diffused throughout nature, but imprisoned, maltreated, and undergoing suffering by contact everywhere with matter. In terms of Western Manichaeism this was the 'Jesus Patibilis,' the Jesus 'hanging on every tree.' Mānī's view of the historical Jesus in the New Testament was docetic. He came upon this earth only in appearance and was in semblance crucified. He was an envoy of the Spirit, and Mānī claimed to be the Paraclete whom he had promised to the world.

— (pages 7-12)

Upon the Elect and Hearers alike the observance of Mānī's ten commandments was enjoined. Parallels to this decalogue in a general way are found in Buddhism, in the Old Testament, and in Christianity. Seven 'seals' as emblems of the religion were likewise to be accepted.

Four of these were doctrinal, comprising (1) love for the Godhead; (2) faith in the Sun and Moon as the great orbs of light; (3) reverence for the divine elements in Primal Man; and (4) a recognition of the inspired office of the great revealers of religions. The other three seals (5, 6, 7) were of a moral and ethical nature, relating to the standards to be observed in daily life. Each of these three implied purity of conduct in word, deed, and thought, symbolized under the terms of 'seal of the mouth, hand, and bosom.' Mānī claimed to be a physician both of the body and the soul, and his teachings were strongly opposed to war.

— (page 14)

The Manichaean church was systematically organized and included five orders. Although the designation of these naturally varies in the different languages, it is clear from all the sources that the five orders, beginning with the lowest, were these: (1) Hearers; (2) Elect; (3) Elders; (4) Bishops; (5) Masters or Teachers. St Augustine was familiar with this accepted arrangement, and he adds that Mānī's upper hierarchy comprised seventy-two Bishops, and twelve Masters or Chiefs, together with a thirteenth who was supreme above all. The higher pontiffs, as we are particularly informed through Chinese Manichaean documents, moved from place to place, and were engaged especially in imparting the more advanced forms of religious knowledge.

The doctrine regarding the life hereafter and the fate of the soul was a tenet of paramount importance in Mānī's teaching. The destiny of the soul was determined in accordance with the threefold division of mankind into Elect, Hearers, and Sinners. The Elect were assured of immediate felicity after death; for, crowned with a

diadem and robed with light, and having quaffed the cup of the living waters, they entered forthwith into eternal beatitude. The [Hearers] had only the promise of a deferred reward. A renewal of life (implying metempsychosis as in Buddhism) was involved until, by advancing gradually to the stage of the Perfected, they could enter into bliss 'in the second form' because of their having struggled in behalf of the faith. Inveterate sinners—those above all who had not accepted the Religion—were doomed to hell.

Despite his austere, sombre view of life, Mānī believed that mankind, through observing his precepts, will steadily advance towards perfection and that all the imprisoned luminous particles, separated ultimately from dark matter, will at last be restored to the Realm of Light. Signs of the times foretokened the coming of the third age, the end that was near at hand. His doctrine of eschatology, or the final end of things, was highly elaborate. The Powers of Light will participate in the establishment of the 'new realm' which his vision, tinged here especially by Christianity and Zoroastrianism, made graphic. When the last atom of missing light is liberated, save for an insignificant, entangled portion, a conflagration, lasting for 1468 years, will destroy the visible cosmos, burning up even that 'close-knit portion' or 'Bolos,' in which some particles of light may still remain commingled with darkness, and will bring to pass the complete triumph of the Forces of Good. Darkness and Evil will then be imprisoned in the dismal abyss to eternity. The 'Third Time' will at last be ushered in and the primordial condition of the universe restored to its original status, with Light reigning in supreme serenity forever.

— (pages 15-16)

The recrudescence of these doctrines and their spread in the Christian world usually took shape under the guise of a protest against the elaborations of the Christian religion. One of the factors in the whole movement was the Paulicians of Armenia and Asia Minor, in which territory Manichaeism had early been disseminated. It was the Paulicians who exercised a direct influence upon Bulgaria in the tenth century by introducing their teachings and giving rise ultimately to Bogomilism (friendship with the beloved of God). The Bogomils of Bulgaria, whose heretical tenets represented a curiously bizarre form of Manichaeism, made an important link in the chain of sects that stretched westward through northern Italy, including especially the Cathari about Milan, and ending in the Albigenses of southern France.

The people in this region of southern Gaul wanted a religion of their own, which was not that of the Church or even what we might now call evangelical Christianity. They found it, not directly in the religion of Mani, but in the ideas which he had set going, and which had penetrated to the Western world. At any rate, the leaders of the Bogomil, Patarine, and Albigensian sects were the old Perfecti of the Manichaeans under a different guise and were the representatives of unwalled monasticism. Thus in the Albigenses the Church found a rival religion, propagated silently, and attracting the more earnest spirits to deny the authority of the Christian revelation and to substitute another in its place. This will explain, if it does not excuse, the fanaticism displayed by those zealots for the teaching of the Church whose orthodoxy failed to win the heretics by persuasion, and finally had recourse, first to the crusading spirit of the French, and then to the organized system of suppression embodied in the Inquisition.

> The preceding outline will at least show the interest which Manichaeism has for students of the history of religions. As a faith Manichaeism no longer exists and was always regarded by other creeds as a heresy, particularly because of its eclectic character. But it was a veritable religion and exercised an influence, for more than a thousand years, upon the lives of countless numbers of devoted followers, inspired by the ideals and high principles of its Founder, whom they accounted divine, and the example of whose martyr death they were led to emulate both at the time and in after ages. In one of the Turfan Pahlavi hymns in praise of Mānī a verse chants him as, 'Thou who art born under a victorious (or effulgent) star in the line of rulers!' Truly, that long-dimmed star has shone out anew in the East, shedding its light on the sand buried ruins in Central Asia.
>
> — (pages 18-20)

It is interesting to note that the Denkard, the Zoroastrian summary of the lost nasks, i.e. treatises dealing with various religious subjects, has this to say about Mani and his teachings:

> (200) The ten sayings of the incarnate druj Mani against the monitions of the piety-adorner, Adarbad Mahraspandan.
>
> (1) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad (Mahraspandan), the adorner of piety, that no unlawful spite ought to be cherished in the mind -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that men should approve of rancor and other evil passions (druj) in themselves. -- (2) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that riches should not be hoarded up avariciously -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that

men should cultivate avarice, consume, appropriate, and waste all the unlawfully hoarded wealth of mankind, and amass riches avariciously for (the benefit or) those who possess devilish inclinations to injure the people of this world. -- (3) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, to welcome the good [people] to be one's guests -- the incarnate druj Mani, proclaimed that men should be hospitable towards the indolent. -- (4) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety that one should marry a well-born woman -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that men should unite in relationship (matrimony) with ill-born women, and regard their deceit as sinless acts. -- (5) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety that one ought to be guided by a true judgment in the case of a plaintiff and a defendant -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the just decision of a judge should be spurned or cursed out of this world. -- (6) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that men should abstain from unlawfully slaughtering cows, sheep, or goats -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that men should in this world habitually rob the property or well-favored (*huavtan*) cattle of everybody, and thereby ruin mankind. -- (7) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that men should regard this life as the time for continuing one's race (i.e. as the means of procreation) -- the incarnate druj. Mani, proclaimed that by this act of procreation men would be led to commit the sin of kunmarz (sodomy). -- (8) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that the wealth of this world ought to be expended in (doing pious actions relating to) God -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the wealth of this world fitly belonged to him who committed sin by its means, and to him who bestowed it on the sinful. -- (9) [One,]

> against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that the wealth of the next world should be acquired for the sake of one's (soul) -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the wealth of the invisible world could be obtained, and men could well hope to be saved from hell, by embellishing (or diligent cultivation of) sinfulness in oneself (i.e. by giving a free rein to one's evil inclinations and passions). -- (10) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that the druj (evil inclinations) ought to be banished from one's own person — the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the druj should be cherished in man's body. -- (11) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that the Yazads should be caused to reside in one's own person as guests, the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the Yazads should not reside as guests in one's person, rather they should be excluded [from it.] -- (12) [One,] against the monition of Adarbad, the adorner of piety, that one should improve himself and, the world, (i.e. his fellow creatures) by means of the good religion -- the incarnate druj, Mani, proclaimed that the world should never be improved, rather it should be destroyed; by the constant blaze of the fire (of hell).
>
> — (Denkard, Book 3, Chapter 200:1-12)

Even though Mani borrowed from Zoroastrianism, in so doing, he really turned it upside down. Light and darkness, or the dualistic principle of the twin spirits, was turned into light being spiritual and darkness being earthly, being associated with matter. (It must be remembered that the earth is a joyful place and has been created by Ahura Mazda for the benefit of mankind). The eschatology is also largely Zoroastrian in nature, believing in upper and lower regions, which can be likened to heaven and hell. But the greatest

borrowing from Zoroastrianism is the three ages in time and the two principles, light and darkness, being wholly separated in the first age, co-mingled in a universal conflict in the second age, and separated once again in the third age by the triumph of light and the relegation of darkness to its dismal abode forever. These ideas are obviously borrowed directly from the 'Zoroastrian Book of Creation', being the Greater Bundahishn. Thus, in Chapter 1 of the Greater Bundahishn, the contest between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, that took place in three periods of around 3000 years each, is stated as follows:

> 25. Then, Ohrmazd knew, by means of omniscience: "If I do not fix a period for his contest too, he can do so unto My creatures, as he will lead the onset and everlasting dispute and confusion; and during the confusion, he can seduce the creatures, and make them over to himself;" just as, even now, there are many men in the mingled state, who practise impiety more than piety, that is, they are mostly performing the will of the Evil Spirit.
>
> 26. Thereupon, Ohrmazd spoke to the Evil Spirit: "I project the time fixed for the contest in the mingled state, to nine thousand years;" for, He knew that He would render the Evil Spirit useless, by this fixation of time.
>
> 27. Then, the Evil Spirit agreed to that covenant, on account of inability to foresee the end; just as, two men, fighting together, fix up a period, saying: "Let us fight such and such a day up till night."
>
> 28. Ohrmazd knew this too, by means of omniscience: Within these nine thousand years, three thousand years

> will pass all according to the will of Ohrmazd; three thousand years will pass in the mingled state, according to the will of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman; and, in the final contest He ought to render the Evil Spirit useless, and He will withhold adversity from the creatures.
>
> — (Greater Bundahishn, Chapter 1:25-28)

Prophet Mazdak lived about 200 years after Mani, during the reigns of Kavad I and Khosrow I, Emperors of the Sasanian Empire. Richard Foltz has this to say about the life and times of Prophet Mazdak:

> Beginning in the late fifth or early sixth century the state-supported religious authority of the Zoroastrian magi faced its most serious threat yet, in the form of a popular movement led by a religious leader named Mazdak son of Bāmdād. This movement, which Mazdak himself called the *drust-dēn* (the "right religion"), seems to have taken shape some time earlier under the leadership of Zardošt of Fasa, a contemporary of Mani and thus a fellow rival with the magi competing for "Zoroastrian" authority. The Kanthaeans may also have influenced him in some respects, but like his predecessor Zardošt Mazdak seems to have presented himself as an interpreter of Zoroastrianism, able to detect "hidden, inner meanings" in the Zoroastrian texts. To the magi, therefore, he was, like Mani, a heretical interpreter of the Avesta, a *zandīk*.
>
> A passage in the *Siyāsat-nāmeh*, an eleventh-century political treatise, purports to describe how Mazdak won over the Sasanian monarch Kavād I (Ar. Qubādh; reigned 488–496 and 498–531), by performing a miracle. Called before the king to explain his unique teaching, Mazdak makes the following boast: "For the

most part the people are wrong in their interpretation of the Avesta and the Zand; I will show them the true meaning." In response, Kavād asks by what miracle he will demonstrate that his teaching is correct. (Apparently performing miracles was more convincing than actual arguments.) Mazdak replies that he will make the sacred fire of the Zoroastrians speak and "bear witness to my prophethood, so that the king and everyone with him may hear." The following day Kavād and his entourage accompany Mazdak to the fire temple, and sure enough, from within the fire a voice is heard affirming Mazdak's prophecy. (This is later shown to be a trick.) From that time on, according to the story, the king would place Mazdak on the throne and sit at his feet like a disciple.

> Then people began to join Mazdak's religion, partly out of liking and sympathy, and partly for the sake of agreeing with the king. From various provinces and districts they came to the capital, and either openly or secretly entered Mazdak's religion. The nobility, the peasantry and the military for the most part had no great zeal for it, but out of respect for the king they dared not say anything; of the priests not one went over to Mazdak's religion; they said, "Let us see what [proof] he adduces from the Avesta

When Mazdak saw that the king had embraced his religion and that people from far and near were accepting his invitation, he introduced the subject of property, and said, "Wealth must be divided among the people, for all are God's slaves and children of Adam. Whatsoever people may need, the expense must be met from communal funds, so that no man suffers neediness and privation in any respect and all men are equal."

After he had convinced Qubād [Kavād] and his other adherents on this point and they had agreed to the sharing of wealth, then he said:

> Your wives are like your other possessions; they too should be regarded as common property. If any man feels desire for a woman let him come together with her. There is no jealousy or intolerance in our religion and nobody is deprived of the pleasures and lusts of the world. The doors of satisfaction are open to everybody.
>
> Then by reason of the sharing of women, people were more eager to adopt his religion, especially the common people. And he laid down the custom that if someone invited twenty men to his house not only would he provide bread and meat and wine and minstrels and other amenities, but all the guests would get up one by one and make use of his wife; and they thought it no wrong.

Taking the more shocking aspects of the author's description with a grain of salt, the appeal of Mazdakism seems to have been one of social justice, indicating perhaps a worsening disparity between the elites—who included the Zoroastrian magi—and the impoverished masses. Factional rivalries at court and a desire on the part of Kavād to counter the power of certain priests likely played a significant role in Mazdak's rise to influence. Indeed, such a situation appears strikingly similar to that in Mani's time, when religious leaders allied with various royal contenders each conspired to bring their own patron to the throne.

Contemporary historians have tended to describe Mazdak's teaching as a sort of proto-communism: making available to the masses goods and women that

> had long been hoarded by the elite. The social program attributed to him was particularly threatening to the rich and powerful, including the Zoroastrian clergy, who supported Kavād's son Khosrow in his efforts to suppress the movement. Following Mazdak's arrest and execution, which likely occurred near the beginning of Khosrow's reign, the surviving Mazdakites went underground. Many of their ideas survived, however, resurfacing in rebellions such as that of Bābak three centuries later.
>
> — (*See* Chapter 11)

Mazdak's teachings, about which little is otherwise known, are then set out as follows:

> **Mazdak's Life and Teachings**
>
> All the surviving textual evidence about Mazdak's movement is from external, antagonistic sources, mainly later Muslim and Zoroastrian ones but also a number of sixth-century Christian texts in Greek and Syriac. A Middle Persian *Book of Mazdak* was apparently translated by Ebn Muqaffa' but has not survived. According to the poetically-embellished tenth-century account in the *Shāh-nāmeh* of Ferdowsi, Mazdak originally held a government post as keeper of the treasury. Seeing that many of society's ills were due to people being in want, he ordered the granaries opened and their contents freely distributed. Ferdowsi gives the following account of Mazdak's teaching to Kavād:
>
> > There are five things that lead us away from justice, and the wise cannot add another to them. These five are envy, the longing for vengeance, anger, desire, and the fifth, which becomes man's master, greed.

> If you conquer these five demons, the way to God is open to you. It is these five that make women and wealth the ruin of the true faith throughout the world. If women and wealth are not to harm the true faith, they must be held in common

Kavād, according to this story, was swayed by Mazdak's message of justice, but his son, Prince Khosrow, the future king Anushirvan (reigned 531–579), was not. In Ferdowsi's account (which must be considered largely fictional), six months after the aforementioned encounter Prince Khosrow organizes a debate by summoning religious leaders from across the realm. At first the king remains impressed by Mazdak's wisdom, but then a Zoroastrian priest confronts his rival with the following words:

> You are a seeker after knowledge, but the new religion you have made is a pernicious one. If women and wealth are to be held in common, how will a son know his father, or a father his son? If men are to be equal in the world, social distinctions will be unclear; who will want to be a commoner, and how will nobility be recognized? If the labouring slave and the king are the same, when a man dies, who is to inherit his goods? This talk of yours will ruin the world, and such an evil doctrine should not flourish in Iran. If everyone is a master, who is he able to command? Everyone will have a treasure, and who is to be its treasurer? None of those who established religions have talked this way. You have secretly put together a demonic faith; you are leading everyone to hell, and you don't see your evil acts for what they are.

Kavād is somehow persuaded by the priest's words, and hands over Mazdak, "along with 100,000 of his followers," to his son Khosrow to deal with according to his wishes. Khosrow has the Mazdakites buried upside down in a garden, "with their feet in the air, like trees." Mazdak is taken to see this gruesome orchard, and faints in shock at the spectacle. He is then strung up on a gallows upside down and riddled with arrows.

The version of Mazdak's fall from grace is depicted somewhat differently in the *Siyāsat-nāmeh*. In the latter text it is Khosrow who persuades his father that Mazdak is a charlatan, but fearing an uprising if they make him a martyr, father and son conspire to lure 12,000 of Mazdak's supporters (a significantly smaller number than in the *Shāhnāmeh*) to court where they are captured and buried upside down in a field with their legs sticking out, as in Ferdowsi's version. Mazdak is then brought out to observe their fate, and he too is buried, but right side up, so that he can contemplate the scene as he dies. Khosrow then continues his treachery by imprisoning his father and seizing the throne for himself.

While neither of these accounts can be considered properly historical, earlier Christian sources suggest the backdrop of the incident they describe, which probably occurred in the late 520s or early 530s. At that time there were two major rival factions at the Sasanian court looking to the eventual succession of the aged king Kavād. Mazdak's supporters favored the king's eldest son, Kāvūs, but the party supporting Khosrow eventually prevailed. Khosrow, known as Anushirvan ("the immortal soul"), went on to become one of pre-Islamic Iran's most celebrated rulers. History credits him with initiating an important series of social reforms, especially in the realm of taxation. In fact these reforms probably began under his father Kavād; ironically, they

may have been what instigated the popular rebellion associated with Mazdak in the first place.

What little is known of Mazdak's religious doctrines comes mainly from later Muslim sources. His teaching is best considered as a reformed Zoroastrianism, and not a version of Manichaeism, as some have argued. Drawing from the common Iranian pool, he retained the dualism and light symbolism of both religions, but not the latter's anti-materialism; rather, he championed the world- and life-affirming approach of Zoroastrianism. His approach to combating greed (āz, considered Ahriman's most powerful tool) through the redistribution of desirables is highly un-Manichaean.

The most detailed description of Mazdakite beliefs is found in a twelfth-century work of heresiography, the *Kitāb al-milal wa'i-nihal* (*Book of Religions and Sects*) of Mohammad Shahrestani (1076–1153). Shahrestani describes a Mazdakian cosmology in which the God of Light presides over the world from a celestial throne, surrounded by the hypostatized powers of Distinction, Insight, Alertness, and Joy. They rule the world through seven ministers, themselves encircled by a ring of twelve spirits. The Realm of Light is opposed by the Realm of Darkness, as in Manichaeism and other Iranian traditions.

According to Shahrestani's account, Mazdak's cosmic system of the Two Realms and the Two Principles was "the same as the greater part of Manichaeans," differing only in that he taught that Light (goodness) works freely and deliberately, whereas Darkness (evil) works at random. And in contrast to Manichaean belief, the "mingling" of the two which characterizes the phenomenal world occurred not through the misguided choice of primordial beings but by chance; salvation, likewise, is by chance, not choice. This notion of salvation, which may be tied to that of sudden enlightenment in

Zen Buddhism, was anti-elitist, in that even the lowliest person might fortuitously receive it.

Like Mani, Mazdak preached a pacifist lifestyle including vegetarianism, but unlike the former, he taught that suicide is an acceptable means to avoid mingling with Darkness. The mark of a righteous person was that he embodied "the Four Powers and the Seven ministers and the Twelve spirits," in which case he "attains the state of divine lord in this inferior world and can do without any religious obligation." In other words, Mazdak rejected any kind of formal religious duty or ritual.

As a self-proclaimed Zoroastrian reformer, Mazdak is condemned as an arch-heretic in Zoroastrian priestly texts. It is significant that these texts consider Mazdakism to be a corrupt form of Zoroastrianism, while they treat Manichaeism as a separate religion altogether.

* * *

The tenth-century account of Ibn Nadim likewise emphasizes the social aspect of Mazdak's movement:

> [He] ordered them to partake of pleasures and to pursue carnal desires, food and drinks, social intercourse and mixing together, as well as to refrain from arbitrariness with one another. For they shared their women and families, as no one of them was excluded from the women of another, nor did he himself withhold [his own women]. But along with this they exemplified deeds of kindness, refraining from killing and causing people sorrow. They had a system of hospitality which no other people had. For if they received a man as a guest, they did not exclude him from anything he desired, whatever it might be.
>
> — (*See* Chapter 11)

The learned author then speaks of how Mazdak's teachings continued, but this time in Islamic dress, as follows:

Survivals of Mazdakite Influence

Iranian esotericism continued to exist, but in Islamic garb. Isma'ili Shi'ism would draw on much of the symbolism of pre-Islamic gnosis, as would illuminationist (*ešrāqī*) philosophy and some Iranian Sufi mystical traditions. The Sufi notion of *'erfān*, understood as sublime insight acquired through a combination of personal discipline and divine grace, has long held an attraction for Iranian Muslim mystics, and is now even studied in the seminaries of Qom as an academic subject.

A seventeenth-century Zoroastrian *ešrāqī* text, the *Dabestān-e mazāheb*, mentions a group of neo-Mazdakites living outwardly as Muslims. In 1844 an English missionary, Joseph Wolff, met a group of Persian Sufis while travelling in Central Asia. "The time will come," they told him, "when there shall be no difference between rich and poor, between high and low, when property shall be in common—even wives and children." Hidden beneath a veneer of Islamic mysticism, the social platform of Mazdak had survived for thirteen centuries!

Bābak remains a popular figure in rural Azerbaijan. In recent years thousands of people have gathered every summer at the foot of his castle near the village of Kalibar in the eastern part of the province, ostensibly to celebrate his birthday. Local women say the reason the castle still stands is because the mortar holding it together was strengthened with eggs brought by women in Bābak'

— (*See* Chapter 11)

Mazdak was also railed against in the Zoroastrian Denkard—this time, in Book 7, Chapter 7:24-25, thus:

> 24. They grant supplies of food, so that they may say the food is proportional to the hunger; they speak of procreation, and say that they say lineage is through the mothers; and they approve of wolfishness, so that they would act something like wolves in the performance of gratifying their desires, like that of the wolf's progeny behind the mother. 25. Moreover, they form their lineage through the mothers; buying their women as sheep, they shall carry off for profit even that son or brother who is the progeny, those that we have produced for your companionship; you are not predominant, but have remained in companionship; you do not even believe them, but you do not establish an ordeal, although it is evident that you will be acquitted; they lie even to their children, so that the advance of the promise-breaker is through them, and even in their own persons.'
>
> — (Denkard, Book 7, Chapter 7:24-25)

Professor Irach J. S. Taraporewala in *The Religion of Zarathustra*, referred to Mazdak as the first Bolshevik in history. He felt obliged, given the condition of the masses in the State of Iran at his time, to preach communism and an absolute community of possessions, including women. However, *qua* the latter, he pointed out the value of self-restraint and renunciation of all sense pleasures, including the killing of animals. Like Zarathustra and Mani, who borrowed from Zarathustra's dualism, Mazdak also stressed the two essential principles of good and evil, which pervade life throughout earth. However, 'Mazdakism' did not last

beyond Mazdak in any significant way and died with Mazdak, given the impracticality of his teachings.

Chapter VIII

Zoroastrianism and Emperor Akbar—Dīn-i Ilāhī

Emperor Akbar was the third great Mughal to have ruled India. His grandfather Zahīr ud-dīn Muhammad, also called Babur, meaning tiger, invaded India in 1526 AD and defeated Ibrahim Lodi, an Afghan ruler of Delhi, at the first battle of Panipat. It is only in the following year, after the victory at the battle of Khanua in 1527 AD against a confederation of Rajputs led by Rana Sanga, that Babur was able to cement his foothold on the Indian soil. He did not live for long after he invaded India, dying in 1530 AD. His nobility can be gauged, not only from the way he led his life, but also in the manner of his death. His eldest son, Humayun, had a fever which would not go away. Babur prayed to the Almighty to transfer that fever from his eldest son so that he would get it instead. His prayers were answered. Humayun lived, Babur died. His grandson Akbar ruled after Humayun's death, succeeding to the throne at the tender age of thirteen. Akbar was like his grandfather, not only in appearance—his aunt Gulbadan Begum said, on first seeing him as a child, that he resembled his grandfather—but also in his broad vision of the tolerance of all faiths. As a matter of

fact, a letter written by Babur to his son, Humayun, one year before he died on 11 January 1529, gives us an insight into the mind of this eclectic ruler:

> Oh my son! The realm of Hindustan is full of diverse creeds. Praise be to God, the Righteous, the Glorious, the Highest, that He hath granted unto thee the Empire of it. It is but proper that you, with heart cleansed of all religious bigotry, should dispense justice according to the tenets of each community. And in particular refrain from the sacrifice of cow, for that way lies the conquest of the hearts of the people of Hindustan; and the subjects of the realm will, through royal favour, be devoted to thee. And the temples and abodes of worship of every community under Imperial sway, you should not damage. Dispense justice so that the sovereign may be happy with the subjects and likewise the subjects with their sovereign. The progress of Islam is better by the sword of kindness, not by the sword of oppression. Ignore the disputations of Shias and Sunnis; for therein is the weakness of Islam. And bring together the subjects with different beliefs in the manner of the Four Elements, so that the body-politic may be immune from the various ailments. And remember the deeds of Hazrat Taimur Sahib Qiran so that you may become mature in matters of Government. And on us is but the duty to advise.
>
> — (Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Written in History*: *Letters that Changed the World*, pages 208-209)

Thanks to a prediction by a sufi saint called Salim Chisti, who lived in the village of Sikri, outside Agra, Akbar's son, Salim, was born in 1569 AD. In order to be close to the saint, Akbar moved his capital to Sikri in 1571 AD, which he

called Fatehpur or the city of victory. In 1575 AD, he erected what was called the Ibadat Khana, or the House of Religious Assembly in Fatehpur Sikri immediately after his return from a successful siege of the city of Patna. The building no longer exists, though it is just possible that its foundation may still be traceable. Abd al-Qadir Bada'uni relates that at the time in question when Akbar was back from a war, his thoughts turned continually towards religion:

> His Majesty spent whole nights in praising God, ...and from a feeling of thankfulness for his past successes he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and meditation on a large flat stone of an old building which lay near the palace in a lonely spot, with his head bent over his chest, gathering the bliss of the early hours of dawn.
>
> — (V. A. Smith, *Akbar's "House of Worship"*, or 'Ibadat-Khana, page 715)

Stimulated by the expectation of receiving Mirza Sulaiman of Badakhshan, a sufi saint who loved theological discussion, Akbar resolved to provide a hall which would accommodate a large number of persons from all the religious faiths, so that it would then turn into a house of discussion of different religious beliefs. Before this hall was built, on every Friday, after the prayer, he would go into a new chapel of Shaikh Salim Chisti (who died in 1572 AD) and hold a meeting with various shaikhs, ulema and pious men. The Ibadat-Khana building was a large one, with rooms which could accommodate as many as 150 persons. Bada'uni relates:

> He used to remain always engaged in his religious duties in the cell close to the Shaikh's new hospice, which is now known as the royal place of worship [*ibadat-khana-i*

> *padshahi*]...When the Emperor rebuilt that cell which was near the Imperial palace he named it the *'ibadat-khana* (place of worship), and, the name of Miyan Abdullah being mentioned in connection with it, he was summoned from Sirhind, and had a personal interview with the Emperor, no other person being present...His Majesty sent him back with honour.
>
> — (V. A. Smith, *Akbar's "House of Worship"*, or 'Ibadat-Khana, page 718)

Likewise, Nizamuddin Ahmad puts it thus:

> The Emperor had from his early youth taken delight in the society of learned and accomplished men, and had found pleasure in the assemblies of men of imagination and genius...His great favour for such men led him, at the time of his return from Ajmer in the month of Zilkada, 982, and in the twentieth year of his reign, to issue his commands for skilful architects and clever builders to erect in the gardens of the royal palace a refuge for *sufis*, and a home for holy men, into which none should he allowed to enter but *saiyids* of high rank, learned men (*'ulama*), and *shaikhs*.
>
> In obedience to the Imperial commands, skilful architects planned a building containing four halls (*diwan*), and in a brief period completed it. When this happy abode was finished, the Emperor used to go there on Friday nights [seil. Thursday - Friday after sunset] and on holy nights, and pass the night until the rising of the sun in the society of distinguished men.
>
> It was arranged that the western hall should be occupied by *saiyids*, the South by the learned (*'ulama*) and the wise; the northern by *shaikhs* and men of ecstasy (*arbab-i-hal*), all without confusion or intermixture.

> The nobles and officers of the Court, whose tastes were in unison with those of men of greatness and excellence, were to sit in the eastern hall. His Majesty graced each of the four halls with his presence, and enriched those present with his gifts and bounty...This assemblage used frequently to last beyond mid-day on Fridays. Sometimes, when His Majesty was tired, one of the attendants of the Court, in whose kindness and gentleness he had confidence, was deputed to perform this duty.
>
> — (V. A. Smith, *Akbar's "House of Worship"*, or 'Ibadat-Khana, pages 718-719)

Abu'l Fazl, one of the Emperor's closest confidants, also spoke of the Ibadat Khana thus:

> H.M. had in the course of seven months done the work of many years in conquering new countries, administering the old . . . and in advancing the science of worship. On the day of Ardibihisht (January 18, 1575) 8 Bahman, Divine month, he illuminated Fathpur by his presence...At this time when the capital (Fathpur Sikri) was illuminated by his glorious advent, H.M. ordered that a house of worship (*'Ibadat-khana*) should be built in order to the adornment of the spiritual kingdom, and that it should have four *diwan* [Mr. Beveridge translates 'verandahs']...He chose the eve of Friday... for the outpouring (i*fazat*). A general proclamation was issued that on that night of illumination, all orders and sects of mankind - those who searched after spiritual and physical truth, and those of the common public who sought for an awakening, and the inquirers of every sect - should assemble in the precincts of the holy edifice, and bring forward their spiritual

> experiences, and their degrees of knowledge of the truth in various and contradictory forms in the bridal chamber of manifestation...To the delightful precincts of that mansion founded upon Truth, thousands upon thousands of inquirers from the seven climes came with heartfelt respect and waited for the advent of the Shahinshah...There were always four noble sections in that spiritual and temporal assemblage.
>
> — (V. A. Smith, *Akbar's "House of Worship"*, or 'Ibadat-Khana, pages 719-720)

In the Ibadat-Khana, starting with Muslims and sufis, he gradually expanded the arena of debate to virtually every faith and included Hindus, Jesuits, Zoroastrians, Jews, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and even those who belonged to the Charvaka school, namely, the materialist school of Hinduism, who were atheists. Discussions took place on Thursday evenings. As he had been exposed to the religious diversity of India, he decided to promote a new policy called '*sulh-i-kul*' with the help of Abu'l Fazl, his close confidant, together with his father, Shaikh Mubarak. Sulh-i-kul is translated as universal peace, which requires absolute toleration of all faiths. During the period between 1578 to 1582 AD, Akbar drew upon all the religions and listened for hours to religious discussions. He had a photographic memory, being dyslexic and not being able to read or write.

At this point, Dastur Meherji Rana travelled to the Ibadat-Khana and greatly impressed the Emperor. This Dastur was a Parsi priest who was born in a priestly family at Navsari, in 1540 AD. He was adopted by his paternal uncle, Vaccha Jesung. It is believed that Akbar first met Dastur Meherji Rana in 1573 AD, when he laid siege to the city of Surat. They

appear to have met at a place near Kankrakhadi. Impressed with the Dastur's knowledge, the Emperor invited him to his court in Delhi. To commemorate his victories in Gujarat, the Emperor built what is called the Buland Darwaza, which is a huge gateway outside the entrance to the massive fort at Fatehpur Sikri. On it, an inscription written in the Persian language reads:

> Isa (Jesus), son of Mary said: 'The world is a Bridge, pass over it, but build no houses upon it. He who hopes for a day may hope for eternity, but the World endures but an hour. Spend it in prayer for the rest is unseen.'

What is intriguing about the inscription is the fact that it is not taken from the Bible. Hence, it must have been taught to Akbar from either the apocryphal books or from a saying of Jesus which was extant in this country—Jesus' immediate apostle, Saint Thomas, being martyred at Madras in India.

The Dastur taught the Emperor the main tenets of Zoroastrianism. There is a delightful tale of a tantric (magician) claiming that with his occult powers, he could make two suns shine in the sky. He challenged all the holy men in Akbar's palace to respond to his miracle. He had in truth actually launched a metal plate in the sky, and the sun's reflection made it appear as if there were two suns in the sky. Dastur Meherji Rana took up the challenge and chanted Avestan prayers, as a result of which the metal plate came crashing down, exposing the magician and amazing everybody at court. As a result of this incident, Tansen, who was one of the nine jewels in Akbar's court, and the greatest musician of his age, composed a song in a particular raag 'sarang', with the words:

Elahi Parsi padhe so qubool, lambi, lambi dadhee Shah Meherji tere mukh pe barsat noor

(The prayers of Parsis are accepted by God, O long bearded one Meherji, your face is blessed with radiance)

Tansen was not the only poet to speak of the effect of Zoroastrian prayers at Akbar's court. In England, Alfred Lord Tennyson, poet-laureate, wrote a poem entitled 'Akbar's Dream', in which he exclaimed:

> The sun, the sun! they rail
> at me, the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,
> who heats our earth to yield us grain and fruit,
> and laughs upon thy field as well as mine,
> and warms the blood of Shiah and Sunnee,
> symbol the Eternal! Yea and may not kings
> express Him also by their warmth of love
> for all they rule – by equal for all?
> By deeds a light to men?

Of Meherji Rana's influence on the Emperor, Vincent Arthur Smith records in his book, *Akbar—the Great Mogul*:

> Akbar probably found more personal satisfaction in Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Parsees, than in any other of the numerous religions examined by him so critically in his odd, detached manner. The close connexion with Persia always maintained by his family, and his manifest preference for Iranian rather than Mogul (Uzbeg and Chagatai) officers predisposed him to look with a favourable eye on the creed and religious philosophy of Iran.
>
> The fit of religious frenzy which assailed Akbar at the beginning of May 1578 was a symptom of the

intense interest in the claims of rival religions which he manifested in 1578-9 prior to the signing of the 'infallibility' decree in September of the latter year. Discussion in his 'parliament of religions' was fast and furious. About that time, probably in the latter part of 1578, the Zoroastrians found their opportunity for giving the emperor further instruction in the mysteries of their faith, with so much effect that he was regarded by many as having become a convert. He is said to have worn the sacred shirt and girdle which every Parsee must wear under his clothes, just as, at a little later date, he appeared in public with Hindu sectarian marks on his forehead and also adopted the use of Christian emblems.

Akbar's principal teacher in Zoroastrian lore was Dastur Meherjee Rana, a leading *mobed* or theologian from Nausari in Gujarat, then the principal centre of the Parsee priesthood in India, whose acquaintance he had made at the time of the siege of Surat in 1573, when the imperial army was encamped at Kankra Khari. Even at that early date Akbar was so eager to learn the mysteries of Zoroastrianism that he extracted all the information he could from the Dastur, and persuaded him to come to court in order to continue the discussion. It is not clear whether the Dastur accompanied Akbar on his return to the capital in 1573 or followed him later, but the Parsee scholar certainly took part in the debates of 1578, and went home early in 1579.

His eminent services rendered at court to the religion of his fathers justly won the gratitude of his colleagues at home, who formally recognized him as their head, an honourable position which he held until his death in 1591. His son who succeeded him also visited Akbar. Old Parsee prayer-books of the eighteenth century are extant which include the name of Dastur Meherjee

Rana among the most honoured benefactors of the Zoroastrian faith.

Akbar rewarded him by a heritable grant of 200 *bighas* of land as subsistence allowance (*madad-i-maash*), which after his death was increased by one half in favour of his son. The deeds of grant are in existence. The Dastur taught Akbar the peculiar terms, ordinances, rites, and ceremonies of his creed, laying stress above all things on the duty of reverencing the sun and fire. A sacred fire, prepared according to Parsee rules, was started accordingly in the palace and made over to the charge of Abu-l Fazl, who was held responsible that it should never be extinguished.

From the beginning of the twenty-fifth year of the reign (March 1580) Akbar began to prostrate himself in public both before the sun and before fire, and when the lamps and candles were lighted in the evening the whole court was required to rise respectfully. The reverence for artificial lights thus inculcated finds expression in his recorded sayings, one of which is: 'To light a candle is to commemorate the (rising of the) sun. To whomsoever the sun sets, what other remedy hath he but this?'

Akbar's devotion to the fire cult partly explains, though it does not justify, the passionate ferocity which he displayed on one occasion in or about A.D. 1603. He was accustomed to retire to his rooms in the afternoon to rest. One evening he happened to emerge earlier than was expected, and at first could not find any of the servants.

When he came near the throne and couch, he saw a luckless lamplighter, coiled up like a snake, in careless, death-like sleep, close to the royal couch. Enraged at the sight, he ordered him to be thrown from the tower, and he was dashed into a thousand pieces.

The imperial wrath fell also upon the responsible officers, though in a fashion less terrible. The story is

not a pleasant one, but its horror is somewhat lessened if we remember that in Akbar's eyes the offence of the 'luckless lamplighter' was a profanation as well as neglect of duty.

The Parsee propaganda was supported by the zeal of the Hindu Raja Birbal, an ardent sun worshipper from another point of view, and it also fitted in well with the practices of the Hindu ladies in the zenana who had their burnt offerings (*hom*), after the Brahmanical fashion. A few years later (1589) Akbar carried further his compliance with Parsee ritual by adopting the Persian names for the months and days, and celebrating the fourteen Persian festivals. But he stopped without ever reaching the point of definitely becoming a Zoroastrian. He acted in the same way with regard to Hinduism, Jainism, and Christianity. He went so far in relation to each religion that different people had reasonable ground for affirming him to be a Zoroastrian, a Hindu, a Jain, or a Christian.

Nevertheless, he could not bring himself to accept frankly any one of the four creeds, however much he might admire certain doctrines of each, or even practise some parts of the ritual of all four. He always cherished his dream of imposing on the empire a new and improved religion of his own which should include the best parts of all those named besides others; and, when at last he felt his throne secure in 1582, the only religion to which he could be said to adhere was that of his personal invention, the *Tauhid Ilahi*, or Divine Monotheism, with himself as Pope-King.

— (pages 162-165)

Stephen P. Blake in his book, *Time in Early Modern Islam*, while describing the Ibadat-Khana and the discussions which took place in it, states that of the three non-Muslim

religious traditions, Zoroastrianism had the greatest impact on the Emperor (*see* page 34).

Given the Emperor's thirst for knowledge and his amazing memory, the Muslim priests went to him in the month of September in 1579 AD, and after quoting a verse from the Quran, enacted what was called the 'Infallibility Decree', which empowered Akbar to act as the supreme arbiter of all questions on Muslim theology. The result of this decree was that the Ibadat-Khana came to be slowly abandoned, later debates being carried on in private apartments, in the palace. These were interrupted by the Kabul Campaign of 1581, after which the third Jesuit mission alone was left with Akbar. They also left after they realized that they could not convert the Emperor to Christianity. (*See* V. A. Smith, *Akbar's "House of Worship*", or 'Ibadat-Khana)

Based upon the knowledge gained from the discussions in the Ibadat-Khana, the Emperor founded the '*Din-i ilahi*' or the faith of one God. This was on the footing that no one religion could claim the monopoly of truth. Din-i ilahi prohibits lust, sensuality, pride and slander, considering them to be sins; piety, prudence, abstinence and kindness are core virtues. The soul is encouraged to purify itself through a yearning for God. Celibacy, though not advocated for all, is to be respected and the slaughter of animals on certain days is forbidden. What is interesting is that there were neither any sacred scriptures, nor a priestly hierarchy or a church to propagate this new faith. Interestingly, in its ritual, it borrowed heavily from Zoroastrianism, making light in the form of the sun, as well as fire, an object of divine worship. Only 19 persons are recorded as having actually joined this faith, which did not really continue after the death of the Emperor. The faith seems to have revolved around the person of the emperor, candidates placing their heads at Akbar's feet

and receiving a painting of the Emperor instead of some other emblem, and then agreeing to abide by the rules of conduct stated above. The person was then initiated into the faith when Akbar touched his turban and then placed it on his head. Sven S. Hartman's book *Parsism: The Religion of Zoroaster* has this to say on the new faith propounded by the great Emperor:

> The great Moghul emperor Akbar (1556-1605) attempted to unite Islam, Hinduism and Parsism in to a religion he called "Din-i Ilahi" or 'Tauhid-i Ilahi" in the year 1582. In this synthesis the elements of Parsism actually became predominant. This is something which generally has not been sufficiently observed. We would like to mention some facts which testify to this Parsi predominance.
>
> a. Akbar abolished certain Islamic customs like the five prayer hours, the fast, the pilgrimage, and the Islamic calendar along with the celebration of Muslim festival. He also disdained knowledge in Arabic, in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), in Quran exegesis (tafsir), and the science of tradition (hadith). At the same time Akbar allowed that which was forbidden in Islam, for example wine drinking.
>
> b. Akbar did not call his religion "Islam" but *Din-i Ilahi* "The Divine Religion", or *Tauhid-i Ilahi* "The Divine Monotheism". He also introduced a formula of renunciation reading thus: "I, So-and-So, renounce the untruthful and false *Din-i Islam* which I have seen and heard from my forefathers, and I enter Sah Akbar's *Din-i Ilahi*".

c. Akbar introduced a new calender, Ta'rih-i Ilahi, in which the months and the days carried Zoroastrian names. Also the years - counted as beginning with 1582 - received Zoroastrian names, namely the same names as the months, and when twelve years had passed a new cycle began with the name of the first month.

But of greatest importance in this issue are the apocalyptic ideas. There were apocalyptic concepts from three different religions that applied in the times of Akbar: the Islamic (si'ite), the Hindu, and the Zoroastrian. All three preached that a world period was nearing its end and that a new period was soon to begin. It was then a thousand years after Muhammad and time for the hidden imam to reveal himself according to certain si'ite ideas. But the Indians, too, expected this world period to end and a new and better one to begin. And we possess New Persian versions of apocalyptic Pahlavi writings found in the rivayat texts which circulated in India in the time of Akbar. In these one reckons with millenia and the last millennium is characterized by the Arab supremacy. After this the Soasyant—the eschatological saviour—was to come. Akbar must thus have changed time computation after having considered the old period as ended. The circumstance that he in this connection resumed the Zoroastrian names for months and days shows that he believed in the assertions of the Zoroastrian apocalypse about the Arab supremacy during the last millennium but no longer. Then the Arab supremacy, as well as Islam, would come to an end and a new religion would arise, and this new religion had its own time computation just like other religions (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).

d. Akbar is said to have been a fire-worshipper and a sun-worshipper, and fire-worshippers from Navsari visited him and instructed him in Zarathustra's religion. Since then he always kept a sacred fire in his palace. It is also reported that Akbar wore the Zoroastrian *kusti,* the sacred cord, around his waist. According to Zoroastrian custom, this cord shall be tied and untied many times a day, and one shall then always recite some specific prayers and turn towards the sun, if visible, or else towards a fire.

— (pages 12-13)

What is interesting is that despite the Parsis being a small refugee community, their religion was able to make a profound impact upon Emperor Akbar. This impact continued into the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was after all, only a viceroy of the Mughal emperors of Hindustan. Till the accession of Hyderabad state to India, the calendar followed by the Nizam of Hyderabad was the same as that followed by Akbar, which is the Zoroastrian calendar with Zoroastrian days and months. The Parsis of India, therefore, continued to spread Zoroastrian ideas in this country as well, but being refugees, they also became Hindu-ised in many ways.

Conclusion

In the Preface, I wrote of Zoroastrianism as a religion which was practiced by three great Persian empires after which it has now fallen to the lot of a few hundred thousand people scattered throughout the globe in continuing its practice. For the last thousand years, a few adherents of the old religion practiced it in Persia, as did a few hundred thousand people in India. This religion which influenced, directly and indirectly, the great Semitic faiths has now, in turn, been influenced by Hinduism as is practiced in India. In fact, the word 'Hindu' is itself a Persian word and does not exist in the Sanskrit language. It is nothing but the Sindhu river or the river Indus—the 'Sa' of the Sanskrit language becoming the Avestan 'Ha', thereby signifying, from a Persian point of view, those persons who live on the other side of the river Indus. This description, which is a purely geographical one, is apt—to be a Hindu, one must be born in the sub-continent that exists beyond the right bank of the river Indus.

Indeed, Hinduism has no dogma. Its beliefs and practices range from a belief in no God at all (early Samkhya, one of the great Hindu philosophical schools, was atheistic). A Hindu may believe in materialism with the consequent absence of any First Cause—as did the ancient Charvaka

school preached in India even before the advent of Mahavira or the Buddha. One may believe in many gods. One may be a Shaivite or a Vaishnavite, and believe in both Shiva's family as deities, and Vishnu and his incarnations. One may believe in monism, as did the great Shankaracharya. One may believe in Ishwar, a personal God, as did Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras.

Indeed, what is the essence of being a Hindu is to believe in and practice the caste system. The four great Varnas, spoken of in the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda, in Hymn XC of Mandala 10, is all that it takes to qualify for being a Hindu. Indeed, Professor R. C. Zaehner in his great work *Hinduism* maintains that the only thing common to Hindus is the caste system (*see* Introduction). And so deep and pervasive is this caste system that it permeates every other religious faith on Indian soil.

The Parsis in India are no exception to this. Whereas, in Persia, anyone can become a priest even today, in India, only one born in a priestly family, so to speak, can aspire to become a practicing priest. Many practices that were followed by the Hindus were also followed by the Parsis till the nineteenth century AD. For example, child marriages were common. Even in this department, the Parsis excelled. Sir Temulji Nariman was married to his cousin, when he was five years old, which marriage lasted for 86 years! This was the longest recorded marriage in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, until only recently, having been surpassed by two other couples—the longest being 90 years. Indeed, the very concept of being a Parsi, according to Indian law, is that such person must be born of a Parsi father—a caste qualification. In Sir Dinshaw Manockji Petit *vs*. Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, the celebrated judgment of the Bombay High Court in 1908, reported as 2 Ind Cas 701, this is what was decided by a Division Bench

of the Bombay High Court—Davar, J., a practicing Parsi and Beaman, J., an Englishman. Beaman, J. did not mince words when he referred to the Zoroastrians in India having become a caste, i.e. ethnicity comes before religion. Indeed, a dual qualification is, therefore, necessary to qualify as a Zoroastrian on Indian soil—one must first be born of a Parsi father, after which one's Navjote is performed—usually before puberty, which initiates the child into the Zoroastrian faith. Many of the Parsi rituals as practiced in India contain fruits and flowers that are prayed over, just as is done in Hindu rituals.

When the Parsis landed at Sanjan on the mainland of India from the Island of Diu, some 1300 years ago, they gave five promises to one Jadi Rana, who was the Yadav ruler of Sanjan at that time:

(i). that the Parsis will explain their religious beliefs;
(ii). that they will adopt the Gujarati language;
(iii). that they will marry only after sunset (a local custom from that time);
(iv). that their women will wear the saree; and
(v). that they will not bear arms.

Each one of these promises has been kept by this refugee community, which, having explained their beliefs, has now assimilated with Hindu religious beliefs and practices. The wheel has indeed turned full circle. Whereas the Zoroastrianism of three great Persian empires influenced the course of Judaism, Roman Paganism and Roman Christianity and to some extent, practices in Islam, the Parsis of India, as a refugee community in this country, have done what the Jews did in Achaemenian Persia—assimilate with the religious practices of their overlords.

Given that many of these Parsis have settled all over the world today, it is yet to be seen as to whether the Zoroastrianism they practice can be said to capture the imagination of other people with whom they come into contact.

I end this book with the hope that those who have read it will not fail to be struck by the nobility and universalism of the Zoroastrian religion, as did post-exilic Judaism, early Christianity, and Islam, particularly in Persia. If nothing else, may its tenets continue to inspire the reader to serve mankind better. May *universal peace* no longer be Utopian.

Acknowledgements

The inspiration for this book came from a lecture that I delivered many years ago at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai. I am a student of comparative religion and over the last three decades, I have been able to gather information which clearly points to the influence of Zoroastrianism, an ancient monotheistic religion, over many other faiths. I was able to pen this book thanks to COVID-19 and the time that I got as a result of the disruption of normal activity by this pandemic. I gratefully acknowledge the help which I received from Ms. Oorvi Mehta for correcting the text of the book and making valuable suggestions.

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The author also deals with Zoroastrianism and Islam and, in particular, the mysterious Prophet Khizr, who instructs Prophet Moses in Chapter 18 of the Holy Quran. Two Persian prophets are also spoken of, namely, Mani and Mazdak, who borrow from Zoroastrianism to form faiths of their own. A chapter is also dedicated to Emperor Akbar's acceptance of Zoroastrianism, as reflected in his new faith, *Dīn-i Ilāhī*.

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