

# *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*

VOLUME I

*From Zoroaster to 'Umar Khayyām*

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# Prolegomenon

## *In the Name of God – the All-Good, the Infinitely Compassionate*

The name Persia conjures up in the mind of Western readers luxuriant gardens, delicately woven carpets, refined miniatures, and a rich poetry that combines the mystical with the sensuous. It also brings forth the image of a powerful and vast empire that vied with ancient Greece and Rome, as well as Byzantium, and that later became one of the major foci and a cradle of Islamic civilization. In ancient times, however, Persia was known to the Occident also as the land where the sun of philosophy shone so brightly that Plotinus entered the Roman army with the hope of going to Persia to encounter its philosophers. Moreover, when what remained of the Platonic Academy was closed by the Byzantines, the philosophers residing there took refuge in Persia. As far as Zoroaster, the prophet of ancient Persia, is concerned, he was known in the ancient world not only as a prophet but also as a philosopher. Furthermore, the three wise men present at the birth of Christ who represent Oriental wisdom hailed from 'the East', which at that time for Palestine would mean most likely no other place than Persia. As for Islamic philosophy, whose earlier schools influenced the West so greatly, most of its figures were either Persian or belonged to the Persianate zone of Islamic civilization.

Yet up to now there has been no anthology in any European language that has made available to the Western audience a selection of the major works from the long tradition of philosophy in Persia. The field of philosophy has not as yet witnessed the appearance of a work comparable to either the monumental *Survey of Persian Art* of Arthur Upham Pope or *L'Anthologie de la littérature persane* of Dh. Şafâ. We hope to fill this vacuum to some extent with this work, which covers the entire tradition of philosophy in Persia from the time of Zoroaster to the last century.

Of course, the character of philosophy throughout its long history has not always been the same. During the pre-Islamic period, philosophy or wisdom (*sophia*/

*khirad*) was completely intertwined with religion, as is also observable in the other great civilizations of Asia such as the Indian and the Chinese. In contrast to the Greece of the sixth and fifth centuries BC, the Persian culture of the Achaemenian period did not produce texts of philosophy separated from religion. Rather, the two remained interwoven as one also observes in certain pre-Socratics such as Pythagoras, Parmenides and the real Empedocles, not as he was seen by Aristotle and Theophrastus. It is within the Persian religious texts of that period that one can find essential philosophical discussions of subjects ranging from metaphysics to cosmology to eschatology. This truth is to be observed already in the *Gathas*, as well as in later texts such as the *Dēnkard*. The most philosophical Zoroastrian texts appear, however, in the late Sasanid and early Islamic period, as can be seen in the *Bundahišn*. The Sasanid period also produced works on political philosophy and ethics, the so-called *tāj-nāmah* literature, which had considerable influence on practical philosophy during the Islamic period.

As for Manichaeism, the second major Iranian religion of the era preceding the coming of Islam, its rich cosmology and cosmogony were known to some authors of the Islamic period and its views of good and evil, theodicy, and ethics posed many philosophical and theological challenges to Islamic thinkers, as they did to Christian ones. Little is left of original Manichaean texts relating directly to philosophy, but many fragments and quotations have survived to this day remaining points of contention for centuries for Islamic as well as Christian thinkers. These fragments are also of much philosophical value irrespective of their later influence.

During the Islamic period, the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*) developed by Suhrawardī referred to a philosophical tradition in pre-Islamic Persia that was called the royal philosophy (*al-ḥikmat al-khusrawāniyyah*) and to which more recent Islamic philosophers have referred as the philosophy of the *fahlawiyyūn* or Pahlavis in consideration of the language, that is Pahlavi, in which Zoroastrian texts of the Sasanid period were written. This philosophical tradition was regarded as based upon the principle of unity and not the dualism for which the Iranian religions are usually known. This consciousness in the later philosophical tradition in Persia of a significant philosophical tradition in pre-Islamic Persia only confirms the views of the Graeco-Alexandrian authors of antiquity and points to a significant truth that is the reality of a philosophical tradition in ancient Persia—one which has been most often neglected in modern scholarship.

This close wedding of religion and philosophy continued into the next chapter of the history of Persia, when Persians embraced Islam and Persia became part of, and in fact a major part of, the intellectual tradition of Islamic civilization. A difference did, however, appear in that following the translation of Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi and Sanskrit texts into Arabic, Islamic philosophy began to manifest itself as a distinct discipline in the Islamic intellectual citadel, although

still being deeply concerned with the questions posed by religion and revelation. By the third/ninth century, Islamic philosophy (*falsafah-hikmah*) was born as a distinct field of knowledge as seen in the writings of Abū Ya‘qūb al-Kindī, the first systematic Islamic philosopher who was, however, an Arab and not a Persian. But a majority of his most famous students, such as Aḥmad ibn Ṭayyib Sarakhsī and Abū Zayd Balkhī, were Persian as the centre of philosophical activity shifted within a century from Baghdad to Khurāsān. Henceforth, Persia became the main arena for philosophical activity in the Islamic world and has remained so to this day.

Of course, Islamic philosophy is a unity closely intertwined with the Islamic worldview and cannot be divided into Arabic and Persian so easily. Needless to say, it is easy to state that Islamic philosophy in Spain belongs to the Arabic zone of Islamic civilization and the School of Iṣfahān to the Persian. But some cases, especially in the early centuries, pose a problem, such as the early Mu‘tazilites and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ (in the fourth/tenth century), in whose case it is not possible to distinguish the Arabic and Persian elements easily from each other. Problems are also posed by the fact that the borders of Persia have not been constant over the centuries and much of classical Persia lies outside of the borders of today’s Iran, with the result that modern nationalisms of one kind or other have sought to lay claim to a common philosophical heritage. Therefore, in discussing philosophy in Persia during the Islamic period, it is important first of all to keep in mind the unity of Islamic philosophy that transcends ethnic and linguistic boundaries and, second, to remember that in speaking of Persia we have in mind a cultural world identified by many historians as the heart of the Persianate or Iranic zone of Islamic civilization and embracing not only present-day Iran but also Afghanistan, the rest of the greater Khurāsān in Central Asia, southern Caucasia, and at certain periods centres of Persianate culture in Iraq, Bahrain, and Anatolia, such as Najaf and Konya. It is also important to avoid all forms of chauvinism that is a fruit of modernism and alien to traditional philosophy in Persia and elsewhere.

In considering philosophy in Islamic Persia we must remember the fact that the Persians also wrote in Arabic and that in the field of philosophy, they wrote mostly but not by any means completely in Arabic, a practice that has continued to this day as one can see in the very popular works of the famous contemporary Persian philosopher ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah* and *Nihāyat al-ḥikmah*. The early Islamic philosophers all wrote in Arabic, Ibn Sīnā being the first person to write a work of Peripatetic philosophy in Persian. But in the fifth/eleventh century, other philosophers, especially the Ismailis, began to use Persian more and more as a vehicle for philosophical discourse to the extent that Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the greatest Ismaili philosopher, wrote his main philosophical works only in Persian. The use of Persian as a philosophical language continued

to increase up to the eighth/fourteenth century, during which such notable figures as Suhrawardī, Afḍal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī wrote major works in Persian. In the tenth/sixteenth century, with the coming of the Safavids, who re-established Persia as a nation-state with Twelve-Imam Shi'ism as the state religion, paradoxically the use of Persian for philosophical discourse began to wane, to the extent that the greatest philosopher of that age, Mullā Ṣadrā, produced over forty prose works in Arabic but only one in Persian. The reason for this shift must be sought in the bringing of many Arab Shi'i scholars to Persia but in any cast its causes are not our concern here. Many other philosophers, however, wrote a number of works in both languages. It was only during the Qājār period in the thirteenth/nineteenth century that Persian began to rise again as a philosophical language, commencing a trend that has continued to this day.

The use of both Arabic and Persian by the Persian philosophers of the Islamic period is of great philosophical interest in that, in contrast to the philosophers of Europe or the Arab world, the Persians could think in two types of languages, one Semitic and the other Iranian (related to the Indo-European family of languages), with completely different structures. In the whole domain of semantics and the relation between language and meaning, this situation provided opportunities of great value, as can be seen in the discussion of ontology by Mullā Ṣadrā.

This anthology, therefore, includes works translated from both Arabic and Persian, but it does not embrace the work of all philosophers who wrote in Persian, such as those of India (e.g., Shāh Waliallāh of Delhi), as well as some Ottoman philosophers. Despite their close link with the Islamic philosophical tradition in Persia, however, such figures have not been included in this anthology because Persia, even within its larger historical boundaries, does not include either world, although very close intellectual and cultural relations were kept between the Ottoman and Muslim Indian worlds and Persia.

In considering what constitutes 'philosophy' in Islamic Persia, we were forced to consider the current meaning of this term in English, as well as the meaning of *falsafah* and *ḥikmah* in Arabic and Persian and the richness of the Islamic intellectual tradition itself. The content of most of this anthology dealing with the Islamic period reflects this concern and especially our desire to present to the Western audience the diversity, variety, and wealth of the Islamic intellectual tradition in Persia. To this end we have sought to include all the different schools of thought that have a philosophical aspect or dimension, and have not limited ourselves simply to the early Peripatetic school, which, despite its inalienable link to the Islamic worldview and the fact that many of its major figures, including the most celebrated among them, namely Ibn Sinā, were Persians, is still called Arabic philosophy in the West. We insist in fact that this philosophy is *Islamic philosophy*, and even when referring to Persia we consider it to be Islamic philosophy in



Persia rather than *Persian philosophy*. In any case, Islamic philosophy includes schools of thought not usually included in what the West has understood as Arabic philosophy in its treatments of Islamic philosophy. Also, needless to say, we have not set the termination of this philosophical tradition to correlate with the time when the West ceased to be interested in it. We have treated this philosophical tradition in an integral manner respecting its whole history to the present day. We have only limited it geographically by focusing upon what flourished in Persia and not in other Islamic lands, this task, as already mentioned, being difficult during certain periods because of the integral nature of the Islamic philosophical tradition and interactions and influences across geographical borders.

The roots of Islamic philosophical thought lie on the one hand in the Qur'ān, the *Hadīth*, and the sayings of certain Shi'i Imams such as the *Nahj al-balāghah* of 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib and on the other in the philosophical heritage of Persian and Greek Antiquity. This truth becomes apparent especially if this tradition is studied from within as it developed over the centuries in Persia. These roots grew into a tree that was nurtured primarily by the Graeco-Alexandrian philosophical tradition, much of which was integrated into the Islamic intellectual universe. From this integration, signs of which can be seen already in the circle of Imam Ja'far al-Šādiq and the meeting between Imam 'Alī al-Riḍā and 'Imrān al-Šābi, the ground was prepared for the birth of the Islamic intellectual sciences (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*), including philosophy with its centre in Baghdad. It was here that with al-Kindī, the 'philosopher of the Arabs', Islamic philosophy properly speaking was born in the third/ninth century. During the next century this school continued, with many Persians coming to study in this city of learning. One might say that the Persian members of the Baghdadi school of *mashshā'i* or Peripatetic philosophy, as this school came to be known, include such stalwart later philosophers as Aḥmad ibn Ṭayyib Sarakhsī and the leader of this school in Baghdad in the fourth/tenth century, Abū Sulaymān Mantīqī Sijistānī.

This school soon spread to Persia itself and by the fourth/tenth century Khurāsān became a second locus of activity of *mashshā'i* philosophy soon surpassing Baghdad. The school of Khurāsān may be said to have begun with the mysterious Abu'l-'Abbās Īrānshahrī from whom only a few fragments survive. But its later members are well known. Abū Naṣr Fārābī, the second celebrated master of the *mashshā'i* school after al-Kindī, studied philosophy in Khurāsān before coming to Baghdad and spending the last part of his life in Damascus. Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Āmirī, the most famous philosophical figure between Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā who died in the fifth/eleventh century, also hailed from Khurāsān as did the most famous of all philosophers of Persia, Ibn Sīnā, who, however, spent most of his life in the western and central regions of Persia. With him *mashshā'i* philosophy reached its peak, and he created a synthesis that has been a continuous

source of philosophical discussion, inspiration, and criticism, but in any case always a living spring of philosophical thought for the past millennium in Persia as well as in many other Islamic lands.

Although Islamic philosophy has always been dominated by schools rather than individuals, there were also a number of important figures in the fourth/tenth century who cannot but be considered as independent philosophers. Among them the most important are Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā' Rāzī and Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī, both also among the greatest figures in the history of science. Rāzī, who criticized Aristotle and to some extent Plato, was influenced to a degree by the pre-Islamic philosophical thought of Persia and was deeply devoted to the 'philosophical life'. Bīrūnī, who was much interested in the thought of Rāzī, was drawn strongly to Indian thought and comparative religion while providing a philosophical criticism of *mashshā'ī* natural philosophy as expounded by Ibn Sīnā.

The development of *mashshā'ī* philosophy was also paralleled by other schools of thought of which, from the point of view of philosophy, the most important are theology (*kalām*) and Ismaili philosophy. Mu'tazilite *kalām*, which was dominant until the end of the third/ninth century, and many of whose practitioners were Persian, provided many challenges to philosophy although not as opposed to *falsafah* as the later school of Ash'arism whose founder was an Arab but many of whose later expositors, such as Imām al-Ḥaramayn Juwaynī and Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī, were Persians.

Ismaili thought, which developed alongside *mashshā'ī* philosophy, was itself of major philosophical significance. Drawn more to the Pythagorean, Hermetic, and Neoplatonic elements of Greek philosophy than to the Aristotelian, it produced major figures from the third/ninth century onward, such as Abū Ḥātām Rāzī, Abū Ya'qūb Sijistānī, Ḥamid al-Dīn Kirmānī, and the most celebrated of the Ismaili philosophers, Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who died in the later fifth/eleventh century. The latter, although a Fāṭimid missionary (*dā'ī*) attached to the Fāṭimid court in Cairo, not only wrote all his works in Persian but also was a major poet of the Persian language. With him and Ibn Sīnā and his immediate students the first active period of Islamic philosophy in Persia came to an end and with changing political conditions for some time philosophy became eclipsed, opposed by both *kalām* and certain strands of Sufism.

With the advent of the Seljūqs, their defence of Ash'arite *kalām*, and opposition to *falsafah*, the last part of the fifth/eleventh century to the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth marks the eclipse in Persia of philosophy and especially the school of Ibn Sīnā. While *mashshā'ī* philosophy prospered in Andalusia, in Persia except for Khayyām and a few remaining students of Ibn Sīnā, no philosophers of any significance appeared on the horizon. This was the period of dominance of *kalām*; but by virtue of its embarking upon an intellectual battle against the *falāsifah*, this *kalām* itself became more philosophical and there developed what

came to be known as ‘later *kalām*’ or philosophical *kalām* associated especially with one of the greatest religious thinkers of Persia, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī (d. early sixth/twelfth century). Another major thinker, Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, was to follow soon after him. Both men wrote against Ibn Sīnā, but in doing so produced works of major philosophical importance and their thought influenced later schools of philosophy in Persia. Because of this fact and also the innate philosophical significance of their thought, they, as well as a number of later members of the school of Sunni *kalām*, are included in the present work and they belong in a sense to the tradition of philosophy in Persia despite their opposition to Ibn Sīnā and the Peripatetics.

The end of the sixth/twelfth century was witness to the rise of a new philosophical school associated with the name of Suhrawardī and known as the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*). Claiming to be a reviver of ancient Persian wisdom, as well as that of the ancient Greeks, Suhrawardī established a philosophy based upon illumination as well as ratiocination. Although put to death in Aleppo, his thought was revived by the two great commentators of his masterpiece, the *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, Muḥammad Shahrazūrī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, a generation after the death of the master. Henceforth *ishrāqī* thought became central to the development of philosophy in Persia and produced a number of important figures until the Safavid period, when it became a major influence upon and was integrated into the School of Iṣfahān in the eleventh/seventeenth century, especially the thought of its founder, Mīr Dāmād, and its most celebrated representative, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā).

In the seventh /thirteenth century the thought of Ibn Sīnā, eclipsed by the attacks of the *mutakallimūn*, was also revived by one of the seminal figures of the intellectual history of Persia, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who was also the founder of Shi‘ī systematic theology or *kalām*. After Ṭūsī, the renewed *mashshā‘ī* school produced many important figures, a number of whom were also interested in *ishrāqī* doctrines and philosophical Sufism, which was now establishing itself as a major intellectual perspective. The renewed *mashshā‘ī* school continued into the Safavid period and despite the spread of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā has had followers in Persia to this day.

As for doctrinal or philosophical Sufism, its origin must be sought in some of the later works of Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī. But the major impetus for this school came from the works of Ibn ‘Arabī disseminated in the Persian world mostly through the writings of Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī. Gradually these teachings also penetrated into Shi‘ī circles and doctrinal or philosophical Sufism became a major intellectual perspective in Persia, producing a number of important thinkers up to and within the Safavid period (in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries) when it also influenced deeply the works of Mullā Ṣadrā. Its expositors have in fact continued in Persia to the present

day. Although members of this school did not consider themselves philosophers (*falasifah-hukamā*) but gnostics (*urafā*), their teachings have the profoundest philosophical import if philosophy is understood in its traditional sense. For that very reason many of them can also be called theosophers in the original sense of the term, not to be mistaken with the nineteenth-century movement in England that became associated with the Theosophical Society. In fact the name given to later Islamic philosophers of Persia, especially from Mullā Ṣadrā onward—that is, *hakīm-i ilāhī*—means etymologically *theosophos* or theosopher.

The period from the seventh/thirteenth century to the tenth/sixteenth was also witness to the rise of systematic Shi'i *kalām* originated by Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, whose *Kitāb al-tajrīd* is foundational to Shi'i theology. Commented upon by numerous writers over the centuries, this work marks the presence of a *kalām* that is also philosophically inclined and not opposed to *falsafah* as was Ash'arite *kalām*. This fact itself was instrumental, along with essential characteristics of Shi'ism itself, to facilitate the revival of Islamic philosophy in Shi'i circles in Persia preceding the Safavids and of course in the Safavid period itself. Shi'i *kalām* itself continued to survive as a living intellectual school into the Qajar period and even into the contemporary era.

The centuries separating Suhrawardī and Ṭūsī from the School of Iṣfahān and its founder Mīr Dāmād were witness to intense philosophical activity in Persia. This truth can be ascertained although our knowledge of this period is still incomplete. During those centuries, and in contrast to earlier Islamic history when various schools of thought were kept distinct from each other as we still see in the writings of Ṭūsī, the *mashshā'i* and *ishraqī* schools became intermingled with each other and also with *'irfān* and *kalām* of both Sunnism and Shi'ism. Different figures appeared at this time that cannot be classified uniquely within one school, such as Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, at once *mashshā'i* and *ishraqī* philosopher, or Ibn Turkah Iṣfahānī, master of *mashshā'i*, *ishraqī*, and *'irfānī* wisdom. That is why it is difficult to classify the philosophers of this period under a single school, even if we have been forced to do so in this work for the sake of organization. The ground was being prepared at this time especially in Shiraz, where most of the philosophical activity of the two centuries preceding the Safavids took place and to whose philosophical life of this period one can refer as the School of Shīrāz, for the grand synthesis of Mullā Ṣadrā who in the eleventh/seventeenth century brought the School of Iṣfahān to its peak.

As for the School of Iṣfahān, it designates the philosophical school associated at its beginning with Mīr Dāmād, Mīr Findiriskī, and Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī, all of whom lived in the Safavid capital Iṣfahān in the tenth/sixteenth century. This school reached its apogee with Mullā Ṣadrā and was continued by his major students, such as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī. But this period also included philosophers who did not follow Mullā Ṣadrā's 'transcendent theosophy' (*al-ḥikmat*

*al-muta'āliyah*). Altogether the Safavid period was very rich in philosophical activity, and although opposed by some Shi'i scholars especially at the end of this period, philosophical activity continued into the Afshār and Zand periods and was revived again in Iṣfahān during the early Qajar period, before becoming transferred to the Qajar capital Tehran, which became the centre of philosophical activity in Persia during the thirteenth/nineteenth and fourteenth/twentieth centuries. The long tradition of philosophy in Persia thus reached the contemporary period and is in fact very much alive in Persia today, where it is undergoing another revival in Qum, the present religious centre of Persia, as well as in Tehran, Mashhad, and several other cities. The richness of the philosophical activity of the past four centuries is demonstrated by the major anthology of the philosophy of this period, in the original Arabic and Persian and not in translation, prepared by Henry Corbin and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī under the title *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens*, of which four volumes of some eight hundred pages each were published; the last three volumes, however, never saw the light of day as a result of the death of Corbin in 1978.

Constrained by numerous factors, human and material, this present anthology cannot be as detailed as that of Corbin and Āshtiyānī, who projected seven volumes for only four centuries. An anthology as detailed as theirs for twenty-five centuries of the history of philosophy in Persia would obviously necessitate some twenty to thirty volumes. Furthermore, ours is an anthology in English and theirs of texts in their original language. Consequently we have had to be more selective, concentrating on the most significant figures and also the most salient parts of their works. Needless to say, making a choice on both accounts was often very difficult and necessitated from time to time a painful omission of either a particular figure or works of a philosopher whose other writings were included in our selection. In any case we do not claim to be exhaustive but hope to be representative and to make available in English the actual thought, reasoning, and exposition of most of the major philosophical figures of Persia in matters that are either of general philosophical significance or of interest to an understanding of the philosophical world of the author in question.

In preparing this anthology we have depended first of all on reliable existing translations. Where these have not been available, we have invited the participation of expert translators from all over the world. We have also relied on printed Arabic and Persian texts for the most part but in some cases recourse has been had to manuscripts as well. Needless to say, the style of translation is not the same for every selection, and there are differences in the views of translators concerning the rendition of certain terms. We have not sought to impose uniformity here, seeing that all of the translators are established scholars in the field of Islamic thought. The diversity of styles of translation may in fact reveal something of the differences

in approach to the study of Islamic and pre-Islamic philosophy today and also the general semantic questions of rendition and interpretation of a philosophical text from one language to another.

*wa mā tawfiqī illā bi'LLāh*

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Bethesda, Maryland

Muharram 1428 AH (L.)

Bahman 1385 AA (S.)

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## Introduction

The Persian prophet Zoroaster (the name is the Greek form of the Persian Zarathustra) probably lived in the mid-late second millennium BC. Zarathustra is one of the first of the prophets of the world's major religions and while the place of his birth is subject to speculation—from Yazd, Kirmān, and today's Sīstān—most scholars believe he came from Central Asia and most likely from what is now called Kazakhstan.

What has survived of his direct teachings are seventeen hymns known as the *Gathas*. It is here that Zarathustra alludes to mythical stories without elaborating on them; but his 'genius' is not so much in creating new myths but in interpreting the old ones and drawing religious, metaphysical and moral conclusions from them. The Zoroastrian religion adheres fundamentally to a dualistic worldview even though in recent centuries a more monotheistic interpretation has become prevalent among most Zoroastrians. There is a strong presence of the view of the universe as alive in the Zoroastrian religion, which is perhaps why all things in the universe are divided into good and evil, helpful and harmful, and ultimately sacred and profane. While Zoroastrianism has undergone doctrinal changes such as a replacement of the early cyclical notion of time with a linear one, the core of its dualistic worldview has remained the same. Zoroastrianism soon spread through the Iranian plateau and came to be the religion of three major dynasties in Persia: the Achaemenians (550–330 BC), the Parthians (250 BC–AD 226) and the Sasanians (AD 226–651).

We have gathered in this chapter a set of writings from the core of the Zoroastrian sacred scriptures, the *Avesta* (Fundamental Utterance), which shed light on a variety of philosophical issues and themes in a religious and often mythical context. It bears witness to the fact that since ancient times an intellectual endeavour to understand the corporeal and the incorporeal world has been a salient feature of Persian culture. This intellectual engagement also may explain why so many philosophers, theologians and mystics of the Islamic world have come from

Greater Persia. Some of them, such as Marzbān ibn Bahmanyār, may have been first generation converts from the Zoroastrian religion.

The first section of the selections on Zoroastrian thought is from the *Bundahišn* in which the creation story, the character of Ahura Mazda, the wholly Good Lord, and the problem of theodicy are discussed. Omniscience, illumination and luminaries, and spiritual entities are also the subject of discussion here. In the second section, portions of the *Greater Bundahišn* dealing with the primal creation and the very process of it from the first spiritual beings who were created, such as Amahraspands, to the rest of the created order are presented. The notions of good and evil, their interaction, the coming of light from Ohrmazd and material darkness are among issues that are elaborated upon in this section. The third section is selected from *Dādistān-i Dīnik* and addresses moral principles. The nature of justice, how goodness comes into existence, and how it is related to the notion of renovation are among issues discussed here. Zoroastrianism in Persia is known as a religion that emphasizes three precepts: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. It is in *Dādistān-i Dīnik* that we see an elaboration of these principles. Finally, the nature of righteousness and how it is that evil comes into the corporeal world are presented here.

Next, we have included a section of *Dīnā-i Maīnog-i Khirad* in which opinions of the spirit of wisdom are presented in the form of sixty-one pieces of advice. These sets of advice range from the moral and spiritual to how one can maintain bodily health.

The *Gathas* are the hymns in which the eternal struggle between Ahura Mazda (God or light) and his adversary Angra Mainyu, the source of darkness and the deceiver of men, are discussed. We have selected a section from the *Gathas* in which the manner of hostility of Angra Mainyu, the evil and destructive deity to Ahura Mazda the Good Lord and how Ahura Mazda is aided in his struggle against spiritual entities like Aeshma Daeva (the evil of wrath) are presented in some length. The physical manifestations of these spiritual entities and their interplay with earthly matters such as *apaosha*, drought, are also alluded to in this section.

Certain passages from the *Greater Bundahišn* have been included where the evil spirit, the 'world year' and its affiliated cosmology are discussed. Some of the materials presented in this section remind one of the creation stories in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For example, there are references to how Ohrmazd or Ahura Mazda first created speech and then expanded the process of creation to include the material domain while viewing evil as an assault upon creation, the antagonism of the two spirits and the question of resurrection. All these teachings are in line with the central tenets of monotheistic religions.

In the section that follows, we have included a number of short excerpts from such works as *Vendidad*, *Hadhokht Nask*, *Maīnog-i Khirad*, *Zātspram*, *Dēnkart*, and *Šikand Gumānī Vazār*. A variety of themes are discussed here. In the *Vendidad*



there is a discussion of eschatology and the fate of the soul in the hereafter and the Chinvat bridge that all the dead must cross before resurrection (similar to the Muslim *ṣirāt*). In the *Hadhokht Nask*, the precepts of good thoughts, good deeds, and good words as well as more on the question of the fate of the soul are discussed. The fate of the soul according to sources of the later Sasanian period is the subject of *Māinog-i Khirad* and once again there are allusions to the crossing of the bridge as a test of the faithful. In the section on *Zātspram*, the mixing of the bounteous spirit and the destructive spirit, how light emanated from the good God and darkness from the evil god, and the interplay of these lights with the twelve creations are issues that are brought forth. The selection from *Dēnkart* deals with good and evil, their definitions, nature and other characteristics. It also offers a description of Ohrmazd and his omniscience, will and wisdom that comes very close to a monotheistic understanding of God. Ohrmazd is said to be the source of all that is good and his rule is perfect and joyful. Finally, there is the section from *Šikand Gumānī Vazār*. Of all the treatises included in this section, this part is the most philosophical in the strict sense of the word. It begins with a discussion concerning the impossibility of any existent thing being infinite, the nature of infinity, the relationship between epistemology, essence and quality, and the immutability of substance.

Next we have included a treatise of a dialogue between a learned Zoroastrian philosopher and the doctors of Islam (*faqīhs*) concerning major philosophical questions. Such questions include the possibility of resurrection, eternity and createdness of the world, the nature of time, sense perception, unity of the soul, intelligence and consciousness and of such spiritual beings as the *fravāhar*.

The last section of our chapter on Zoroastrian sacred writings comes from *Dēnkart*. This section deals primarily with moral issues and can be characterized as wisdom literature (*andarz* in Pahlavi). The Spirit of Wisdom appears to be offering moral advice to the people covering a wide range of topics among which one can name good deeds that are necessary for going to heaven, sin, the nature of righteousness, truthfulness, peace and avoidance of hell. Also among the themes discussed are what moral conduct is and how one should surrender oneself to religion, the maintenance of bodily and spiritual health, and the relationship between knowledge of religion and elimination of demons from the world.

Though cloaked in mythical language, the Zoroastrian writings included here represent a rich and diverse set of philosophical ideas and issues most of which later resurface in the writings of Muslim philosophers in Persia. These writings also firmly establish the presence of an active intellectual life in ancient Persia that stretches over one thousand years before the rise of Islam.

Mehdi Aminrazavi

## The Original Creation From *Bundahišn*

Reprinted from ‘Bundahišn’, tr. E. W. West, in F. Max Müller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East: Pahlavi Texts*, (Delhi, 1977), vol. 5, pp. 3–20.

### Chapter I

*In the name of the creator Aûharmazd*

1. The Zand-âkâs (‘Zand-knowing or tradition-informed’),<sup>1</sup> which is first about Aûharmazd’s original creation and the antagonism of the evil spirit,<sup>2</sup> and afterwards about the nature of the creatures from the original creation till the end, which is the future existence (*tanû-î pasîno*).

2. As *revealed* by the religion of the Mazdayasnians, so it is declared that Aûharmazd is supreme in omniscience and goodness, and unrivalled<sup>3</sup> in splendour,

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1. The Pâzand and most of the modern Pahlavi manuscripts have, ‘From the Zand-âkâs’, but the word *min*, ‘from’, does not occur in the old manuscript K20, and is a modern addition to M6. From this opening sentence it would appear that the author of the work gave it the name Zand-âkâs.

2. The Avesta Angra-mainyu, the spirit who causes adversity or anxiety (see Darmesteter’s *Ormazd et Ahriman*, pp. 92–95); the Pahlavi name is, most probably, merely a corrupt transliteration of the Avesta form, and may be read Ganrâk-mainôk, as the Avesta Spenta-mainyu, the spirit who causes prosperity, has become Spênâk-mainôk in Pahlavi. This latter spirit is represented by Aûharmazd himself in the Bundahišn. The Pahlavi word for ‘spirit’, which is read *madônâd* by the Parsis, and has been pronounced *minavad* by some scholars and *minôt* by others, is probably a corruption of *mainôk*, as its Sasanian form was *minô*. If it were not for the extra medial letter in *ganrâk*, and for the obvious partial transliteration of *spênâk*, it would be preferable to read *ganâk*, ‘smiting’, and to derive it from a supposed verb *gandan*, ‘to smite’ (Av. *ghna*), as proposed by most Zendists. A Parsi would probably suggest *gandan*, ‘to stink’.

3. Reading *aham-kâi*, ‘without a fellow-sovereign, peerless, unrivalled, and independent’. This rare word occurs three times in §§ 2, 3, and some Pâzand writers suggest the meaning ‘everlasting’ (by means of the Persian gloss *hamîsah*), which is plausible enough, but *hâmakî* would be an extraordinary mode of writing the very common word *hamâi*, ‘ever’.

the region of light is the place of Aûharmazd, which they call ‘endless light’, and the omniscience *and* goodness of the unrivalled Aûharmazd is what they call ‘revelation.’<sup>1</sup>

3. Revelation is the explanation of both *spirits* together; one is he who is independent of unlimited time,<sup>2</sup> because Aûharmazd and the region, religion, and time of Aûharmazd were and are and ever will be; *while* Aharman<sup>3</sup> in darkness, with backward understanding and desire for destruction, was *in* the abyss, and it is *he* who *will* not be; and the place of that destruction, and also of that darkness, is what they call the ‘endlessly dark’.

4. And between them was empty space, *that* is, what they call ‘air’, in which is now *their* meeting.

5. Both are limited and unlimited spirits, for the supreme is that which they call endless light and the abyss that which is endlessly dark, so that between them is a void, and one is not connected with the other; and, again, both spirits are limited as to their own selves.

6. And, secondly, on account of the omniscience of Aûharmazd, both things are in the creation of Aûharmazd, the finite and the infinite; for this they know is that which is in the covenant of both spirits.

7. And, again, the complete sovereignty of the creatures of Aûharmazd is in the future existence, and that also is unlimited for ever and everlasting; and the creatures of Aharman will perish at the time when<sup>4</sup> the future of existence occurs, and that also is eternity.

8. Aûharmazd, through omniscience, knew that Aharman exists, *and* whatever he schemes he infuses with malice and greediness till the end; *and* because He accomplishes the end by many means, He also produced spiritually the creatures which were necessary for those means, *and* they remained three thousand years in a spiritual *state*, so that they were unthinking<sup>5</sup> and unmoving, with intangible bodies.

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1. The word *dinô* (properly *dênô*), Av. *daêna*, being traceable to a root *dî*, ‘to see’, must originally have meant ‘a vision’ (see Haug’s *Essays on the Religion of the Parsis*, 2nd ed. p. 152, n. 2), whence the term has been transferred to ‘religion’ and all religious observances, rules, and writings; so it may be translated either by ‘religion’ or by ‘revelation’.

2. This appears to be the meaning, but the construction of § 3 is altogether rather obscure, and suggestive of omissions in the text.

3. The usual name of the evil spirit; it is probably an older corruption of Angra-mainyu than Ganrâk-maintök, and a less technical term. Its Sasanian form was Aharmani.

4. Substituting *amat*, ‘when’, for *mûn*, ‘which’, two *Huzvârîs* forms which are frequently confounded by Pahlavi copyists because their Pâzand equivalents, *ka* and *ke*, are nearly alike.

5. Reading *aminidâr* in accordance with M6, which has *aminidâr* in Chap. XXXIV, 1, where the same phrase occurs. Windischmann and Justi read *amûtâr*, ‘uninjured, invulnerable’, in both places. This sentence appears to refer to a preparatory creation of embryonic and immaterial existences, the prototypes, *fravashis*, spiritual counterparts, or guardian angels of the spiritual and material creatures afterwards produced.

9. The evil spirit, on account of backward knowledge, was not aware of the existence of Aûharmazd; and, afterwards, he arose from the abyss, and came in unto the light which he saw.

10. Desirous of destroying, and because of *his* malicious nature, he rushed in to destroy that light of Aûharmazd unassailed by fiends, and he saw its bravery and glory were greater than his own; so he fled back to the gloomy darkness, and formed many demons and fiends; *and* the creatures of the destroyer arose for violence.

11. Aûharmazd, by whom the creatures of the evil spirit were seen, creatures terrible, corrupt, and bad, also considered them not commendable (*bûrzišnîk*).

12. Afterwards, the evil spirit saw the creatures of Aûharmazd; they appeared many creatures of delight (*vâyah*), enquiring creatures, and they seemed to him commendable, and he commended the creatures and creation of Aûharmazd.

13. Then Aûharmazd, with a knowledge<sup>1</sup> of which way the end of the matter *would be*, went to meet the evil spirit, and proposed peace to him, *and* spoke thus: 'Evil spirit! Bring assistance unto my creatures, and offer praise! So that, in reward for it, ye (you and your creatures) may become immortal and undecaying, hungerless and thirstless.'

14. And the evil spirit shouted thus:<sup>2</sup> 'I *will* not depart, I *will* not provide assistance for thy creatures, I *will* not offer praise among thy creatures, and I am not of the same opinion with thee as to good things. I *will* destroy thy creatures for ever and everlasting; moreover, I *will* force all thy creatures into disaffection to thee and affection for myself.'

15. And the explanation thereof is this that the evil spirit reflected in this manner, that Aûharmazd was helpless as regarded him,<sup>3</sup> therefore He proffers peace; and he did not agree, but bore on even into conflict with Him.

16. And Aûharmazd spoke thus: 'you are not omniscient and almighty, O evil spirit! So that it is not possible for thee to destroy me, and it is not possible for thee to force my creatures so that they *will* not return to my possession.'

17. Then Aûharmazd, through omniscience, knew that: If I do not grant a period of contest, then it *will* be possible for him to act so that he *may* be able to cause the seduction of my creatures to himself. As even now there are many of the intermixture of mankind who practise wrong more than right.

18. And Aûharmazd spoke to the evil spirit thus: 'Appoint a period! So that the

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1. The Huz. Khavitûnast stands for the *Pâz. Dânist* with the meaning, here, of 'what is known, knowledge', as in Persian.

2. Literally, 'and it was shouted by him, the evil spirit, thus:' the usual idiom when the nominative follows the verb.

3. The words *dên Val* stand for *dên valman*.

intermingling of the conflict may be for nine thousand years.' For he knew that by appointing this period the evil spirit *would* be undone.

19. Then the evil spirit, unobservant and through ignorance, was content with that agreement; just like two men quarrelling together, who propose a time thus: Let us appoint such-and-such a day for a fight.

20. Aûharmazd also knew this, through omniscience, that within these nine thousand years, *for* three thousand years everything proceeds *by* the will of Aûharmazd, three thousand years *there is* an intermingling of the wills of Aûharmazd and Aharman, and the last three thousand years the evil spirit is disabled, and they keep the adversary away<sup>1</sup> from the creatures.

21. Afterwards, Aûharmazd recited the Ahunavar thus: *Yathâ ahû vairyô* ('as a heavenly lord is to be chosen'), &c.<sup>2</sup> once, *and* uttered the twenty-one words;<sup>3</sup> He also exhibited to the evil spirit His own triumph in the end, and the impotence of the evil spirit, the annihilation of the demons, and the resurrection *and* undisturbed future existence of the creatures for ever and everlasting.

22. And the evil spirit, who perceived his own impotence and the annihilation of the demons, became confounded, and fell back to the gloomy darkness; even so as is declared in revelation, that, when one of its (the Ahunavar's) three *parts* was uttered, the evil spirit contracted *his* body through fear, and when two parts of it were uttered he fell upon *his* knees, and when all of it was uttered he became confounded and impotent as to the harm he caused the creatures of Aûharmazd, *and* he remained three thousand years in confusion.<sup>4</sup>

23. Aûharmazd created *his* creatures in the confusion of Aharman; first he produced Vohûman ('good thought'), by whom the progress of the creatures of Aûharmazd was advanced.

1. That is, 'the adversary is kept away'. In Pahlavi the third person plural is the indefinite person, as in English. These 9,000 years are in addition to the 3,000 mentioned in § 8, as appears more clearly in Chap. XXXIV, 1.

2. This is the most sacred formula of the Parsis, which they have to recite frequently, not only during the performance of their ceremonies, but also in connection with most of their ordinary duties and habits. It is neither a prayer, nor a creed, but a declaratory formula in meter, consisting of one stanza of three lines, containing twenty-one Avesta words, as follows:

*Yathâ ahû vairyô, athâ ratus, ashâd kid hakâ,  
Vangheus dazdâ mananghò, skyaothnanâm angheus mazdâi,  
Khshathremkâ ahurâi â, yim dregubyô dadad vâstârem.*

And it may be translated in the following manner: 'As a heavenly lord is to be chosen, so is an earthly master (spiritual guide), for the sake of righteousness, *to be* a giver of the good thoughts of the actions of life towards Mazda; and the dominion is for the lord (Ahura) whom he (Mazda) has given as a protector for the poor' (see Haug's *Essays on the Religion of the Parsis*, 2nd ed., pp. 125, 141).

3. The word *mârik* must mean 'word' here, but in some other places it seems to mean 'syllable' or 'accented syllable'.

4. This is the first third of the 9,000 years appointed in §§ 18, 20, and the second 3,000 years mentioned in Chap. XXXIV, 1.

24. The evil spirit first created<sup>1</sup> Mitôkht ('falsehood'), and then Akôman ('evil thought').

25. The first of Aûharmazd's creatures of the world *was* the sky, and his good thought (Vohûman), by good procedure,<sup>2</sup> produced the light of the world, along with which was the good religion of the Mazdayasnians; this *was* because the renovation (*frashakard*)<sup>3</sup> which happens to the creatures *was* known to him.

26. Afterwards *arose* Ardavahist, and then Shatvaîrô, and then Spendarmad, and then Horvadam, and then Amerôdad.<sup>4</sup>

27. From the dark world of Aharman *were* Akôman and Andar, and then Sôvar, and then Nâkahêd, and then Tâîrêv and Zâîrik.<sup>5</sup>

28. Of Aûharmazd's creatures of the world, the first *was* the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, plants; the fifth, animals; the sixth, mankind

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1. It is usual to consider *dâdan* (Huz. *yehabûntan*), when traceable to Av. *dâ* = Sans. *dhâ*, as meaning 'to create', but it can hardly be proved that it means to create out of nothing, any more than any other of the Avesta verbs which it is sometimes convenient to translate by 'create'. Before basing any argument upon the use of this word it will, therefore, be safer to substitute the word 'produce' in all cases.

2. Or it may be translated, 'and from it Vohûman, by good procedure,' &c. The position here ascribed to Vohûman, or the good thought of Aûharmazd, bears some resemblance to that of the Word in John i. 1-5, but with this essential difference, that Vohûman is merely a creature of Aûharmazd, not identified with him; for the latter idea would be considered, by a Parsi, as rather inconsistent with strict monotheism. The 'light of the world' now created must be distinguished from the 'endless light' already existing with Aûharmazd in § 2.

3. The word *frashakard*, 'what is made durable, perpetuation', is applied to the renovation of the universe which is to take place about the time of the resurrection, as a preparation for eternity.

4. These five, with Vohûman and Aûharmazd in his angelic capacity, constitute the seven Ameshaspendis, 'undying causers of prosperity, immortal benefactors,' or archangels, who have charge of the whole material creation. They are personifications of old Avesta phrases, such as Vohûmanô, 'good thought;' Asha-vahista, 'perfect rectitude;' Khshathra-vairyâ, 'desirable dominion;' Spenta-ârmaiti, 'bountiful devotion;' Haurvatâd, 'completeness or health;' and Ameretâd, 'immortality.'

5. These six demons are the opponents of the six archangels respectively (see Chap. XXX, 29); their names in the Avesta are, Akem-manô, 'evil thought;' Indra, Sauru, Naunghaithya, Tauru, Zairika (see *Vendidâd* X, 17, 18 Sp., and XIX, 43 W.), which have been compared with the Vedic god Indra, Sarva (a name of Siva), the Nâsatyas, and Sans. *tura*, 'diseased,' and *garas*, 'decay,' respectively. For further details regarding them, see Chap. XXVIII, 7-13.

## Chapter II

### *On the formation of the luminaries.*

1. Aûharmazd produced illumination between the sky and the earth, the constellation stars and those also not of the constellations,<sup>1</sup> then the moon, and afterwards the sun, as I *shall* relate.

2. First he produced the *celestial* sphere, and the constellation stars are assigned to it by him; especially these twelve whose names are Varak (the Lamb), Tôrâ (the Bull), Dô-patkar (the Two-figures or Gemini), Kalakang (the Crab), Sêr (the Lion), Khûsak (Virgo), Tarâzûk (the Balance), Gazdûm (the Scorpion), Nîmâsp (the Centaur or Sagittarius), Vahik<sup>2</sup> (Capricornus), Dûl (the Water pot), and Mâhik (the Fish);

3. Which, from their original creation, *were divided* into the twenty-eight subdivisions of the astronomers,<sup>3</sup> of which the names are Padêvar, Pêsh-Parviz, Parviz, Paha, Avêsar, Besn, Rakhvad, Taraha, Avra, Nahn, Miyân, Avdem, Mâshâha, Spûr, Husru, Srob, Nur, Gêl, Garafsa, Varant, Gau, Goî, Muru, Bunda, Kahtsar, Vaht, Miyân, Kaht.<sup>4</sup>

4. And all his original creations, residing in the world, are committed to them;<sup>5</sup> so that when the destroyer arrives they overcome the adversary *and* their own persecution, and the creatures are saved from those adversities.

5. As a specimen of a warlike army, which is destined for battle, they have ordained every single constellation of those 6,480 thousand small stars as assistance; and among those constellations four chieftains, appointed on the four sides, are leaders.

1. The word *akhtar* is the usual term in Pahlavi for a constellation of the zodiac; but the term *apâkhtar*, 'away from the *akhtar*', means not only 'the north', or away from the zodiac, but also 'a planet', which is in the zodiac, but apart from the constellations. The meaning of *akhtar*, most suitable to the context here, appears to be the general term 'constellation'.

2. Written Nahâzik here, both in K2o and M6, which may be compared with Pers. *nahâz*, 'the leading goat of a flock,' but the usual word for 'Capricornus' is Vahik, as in Chap. V, 6. None of the other names of the signs of the zodiac are written here in Pâzand, but it may be noted that if the *ah* in Vahik were written in Pâzand (that is, in Avesta characters), the word would become the same as Nahâzik in Pahlavi.

3. Literally, 'fragments of the calculators', *khurdak-i hâmarîkân*. These subdivisions are the spaces traversed daily by the moon among the stars, generally called 'lunar mansions'.

4. All these names are written in Pâzand, which accounts for their eccentric orthography, in which both K2o and M6 agree very closely. The subdivision Parviz is evidently the Pers. *parvên*, which includes the Pleiades, and corresponds therefore to the Sanskrit Nakshatra Krittikâ. This correspondence leads to the identification of the first subdivision, Padêvar, with the Nakshatra Asvinî. The Pâzand names are so corrupt that no reliance can be placed upon them, and the first step towards recovering the true Pahlavi names would be to transliterate the Pâzand back into Pahlavi characters. The ninth subdivision is mentioned in Chap. VII, 1 by the name Avrak.

5. That is, to the zodiacal constellations, which are supposed to have special charge of the welfare of creation.

6. On the recommendation of those chieftains the many unnumbered stars are specially assigned to the various quarters and various places, as the united strength *and* appointed power of those constellations.

7. As it is said that Tistar is the chieftain of the east, Satavêš the chieftain of the west, Vanand the chieftain of the south, *and* Haptôk-ring the chieftain of the north.<sup>1</sup>

8. The great *one* which they call a Gâh (period of the day), which they say is the great *one* of the middle of the sky, till *just* before the destroyer came was the midday (or south) *one* of the five, that is, the Rapîtvin.<sup>2</sup>

9. Aûharmazd performed the spiritual Yazisn ceremony with the archangels (*ameshôspondân*) in the Rapîtvin Gâh, and in the Yazisn he supplied every means necessary for overcoming the adversary.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Of these four constellations of stars, which are said to act as leaders, there is no doubt that Haptôk-ring, the chieftain of the north, is Ursa Major; and it is usually considered that Tistar, the chieftain of the east, is Sirius; but the other two chieftains are not so well identified, and there may be some doubt as to the proper stations of the eastern and western chieftains. It is evident, however, that the most westerly stars, visible at any one time of the year, are those which set in the dusk of the evening; and east of these, all the stars are visible during the night as far as those which rise at daybreak, which are the most easterly stars visible at that time of the year. Tistar or Sirius can, therefore, be considered the chieftain of the eastern stars only when it rises before daybreak, which it does at the latter end of summer; and Haptôk-ring or Ursa Major is due north at midnight (on the meridian below the pole) at about the same time of the year. These stars, therefore, fulfil the conditions necessary for being chieftains of the east and north at the end of summer, and we must look for stars capable of being chieftains of the south and west at the same season. Now, when Ursa Major is near the meridian below the pole, Fomalhaut is the most conspicuous star near the meridian in the far south, and is probably to be identified with Vanand the chieftain of the south. And when Sirius rises some time before daybreak, Antares (in Scorpio) sets some time after dusk in the evening, and may well be identified with Satavêš the chieftain of the west. Assuming that there has been a precession of the equinoxes equivalent to two hours of time, since the idea of these chieftains (which may perhaps be traced to Avesta times) was first formed, it may be calculated that the time of year when these leading stars then best fulfilled that idea was about a month before the autumnal equinox, when Ursa Major would be due north three-quarters of an hour after midnight, and Fomalhaut due south three-quarters of an hour before midnight, Sirius would rise three hours before the sun, and Antares would set three hours after the sun. In the Avesta these leading stars are named Tistrya, Satavaêša, Vanant, and Haptôi-ringa (see Tistar Yt. 0, 8, 9, 12, 32, &c., Rashnu Yt. 26–28, Sîrôz. 13).

2. This translation, though very nearly literal, must be accepted with caution. If the word *mas* be not a name it can hardly mean anything but 'great,' and that it refers to a constellation appears from Chap. V, 1. The word *khômsâk* is an irregular form of the Huz. *Khômšyâ*, 'five', and may refer either to the five chieftains (including 'the great one') or to the five Gâhs or periods of the day, of which Rapîtvin is the midday one (see Chap. XXV, 9). The object of the text seems to be to connect the Rapîtvin Gâh with some great mid-sky and midday constellation or star, possibly Regulus, which, about 960 BC, must have been more in the daylight than any other important star during the seven months of summer, the only time that the Rapîtvin Gâh can be celebrated (see Chap. XXV, 7–14). Justi has, 'They call that the great one of the place, which is great in the middle of the sky; they say that before the enemy came it was always midday, that is, Rapîtvin.' Windischmann has nearly the same, as both follow the Pâzand MSS. in reading *hômšak* (as a variant of *hamšak*), 'always', instead of *khômšâk*.

3. Or 'adversity'.



10. He deliberated with the consciousness (*bôd*) and guardian spirits (*fravâhar*) of men,<sup>1</sup> and the omniscient wisdom, brought forward among men, spoke thus: ‘Which seems to you the more advantageous, when<sup>2</sup> I shall present you to the world? *that* you shall contend in a bodily form with the fiend (*drûg*), and the fiend shall perish, and in the end I *shall* have you prepared again perfect and immortal, and in the end give you back to the world, *and* you *will* be wholly immortal, undecaying, and undisturbed; or *that* it be always necessary to provide you protection from the destroyer?’

11. Thereupon, the guardian spirits of men became of the same opinion with the omniscient wisdom about going to the world, on account of the evil *that* comes upon them, in the world, from the fiend (*drûg*) Aharman, and *their* becoming, at last, again unpersecuted by the adversary, perfect, and immortal, in the future existence, for ever and everlasting.

### Chapter III

1. On the rush of the destroyer at the creatures it is said, in revelation, that the evil spirit, when he saw the impotence of himself and the confederate<sup>3</sup> (*hâm-dast*) demons, owing to the righteous man,<sup>4</sup> became confounded, *and* seemed in confusion three thousand years.

2. During that confusion the archfiends<sup>5</sup> of the demons severally shouted thus: ‘Rise up, *thou* father of us! For we *will* cause a conflict in the world, the distress and injury from which *will* become those of Aûharmazd and the archangels.’

3. Severally they twice recounted their own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit, through fear of the righteous man, was not able to lift up *his* head until the wicked Gêh<sup>6</sup> came, at the completion of the three thousand years.

4. And she shouted to the evil spirit thus: ‘Rise up, *thou* father of us! For I *will* cause that conflict in the world wherefrom the distress and injury of Aûharmazd and the archangels *will* arise.’ And she twice recounted severally her own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit rose not from that confusion, through fear of the righteous man.

6. And, again, the wicked Gêh shouted thus: ‘Rise up, *thou* father of us! for in that conflict I *will* shed thus much vexation<sup>7</sup> on the righteous man and the labouring ox

1. These were among the *fravashis* already created (see Chap. I, 8).

2. Reading *amat*, ‘when’, instead of *mûn*, ‘which’ (see note to Chap. I, 7).

3. The Pâzand MSS. have *garôist*, for the Huz. *Hêmnunast*, ‘trusted’. Windischmann and Justi have ‘all’.

4. Probably Gâyônard.

5. The word *kamâarakân* is literally ‘those with an evil pate’, and is derived from Av. *kameredha*, ‘the head of an evil being’, also applied to ‘the evil summit’ of Mount Arezûra (*Vend.* XIX, 140, 142), which is supposed to be at the gate of hell (see Chap. XII, 8). That the chief demons or arch-fiends are meant, appears more clearly in Chap. XXVIII, 12, 44, where the word is *kamârikân*.

6. The personification of the impurity of menstruation.

7. The word *vêsh* or *vish* may stand either for *bêsh*, ‘distress, vexation’, as here assumed, or for

that, through my deeds, life *will* not be wanted, and I will destroy their living souls (*nismô*);<sup>1</sup> I *will* vex the water, I *will* vex the plants, I *will* vex the fire of Aûharmazd, I *will* make the whole creation of Aûharmazd vexed.'

7. And she so recounted those evil deeds a second time, that the evil spirit was delighted and started up from that confusion; and he kissed Gêh upon the head, and the pollution which they call menstruation became apparent in Gêh.

8. He shouted to Gêh thus: 'What is thy wish? so that I may give *it* thee.' And Gêh shouted to the evil spirit thus: 'A man is the wish, so give *it* to me.'

9. The form of the evil spirit was a log-like lizard's (*vazak*) body, and he appeared a young man of fifteen years to Gêh, and that brought the thoughts of Gêh to him.<sup>2</sup>

10. Afterwards, the evil spirit, with the confederate demons, went towards the luminaries, and he saw the sky; and he led them up, fraught with malicious intentions.

11. He stood upon one-third<sup>3</sup> of the inside of the sky, and he sprang, like a snake, out of the sky down to the earth.

12. In the month Fravardîn and the day Aûharmazd<sup>4</sup> he rushed in at noon, and thereby the sky was as shattered and frightened by him, as a sheep by a wolf.

13. He came on to the water which was arranged<sup>5</sup> below the earth, and then the middle of this earth was pierced *and* entered by him.

14. Afterwards, he came to the vegetation, then to the ox, then to Gâyôward, and then he came to fire;<sup>6</sup> so, just like a fly, he rushed out upon the whole creation; and he made the world quite as injured and dark<sup>7</sup> at midday as though it were in dark night.

15. And noxious creatures were diffused by him over the earth, biting and venomous, such as the snake, scorpion, frog (*kalvâk*), and lizard (*vazak*), so that not so much as the point of a needle remained *free* from noxious creatures.

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*vish*, 'poison', as translated by Windischmann and Justi in accordance with the Pâz. MSS.

1. That this is the Huzvâris of *rûbân*, 'soul', appears from Chap. XV, 3–5, where both words are used indifferently; but it is not given in the Huz.-Pâz. Glossary. It is evenly equivalent to Chald. *nismâ*, and ought probably to have the traditional pronunciation *nisman*, an abbreviation of *nismman*.

2. This seems to be the literal meaning of the sentence, and is confirmed by Chap. XXVIII, 1, but Windischmann and Justi understand that the evil spirit formed a youth for Gêh out of a toad's body. The incident in the text may be compared with Milton's idea of Satan and Sin in *Paradise Lost*, Book II, pp. 745–765.

3. Perhaps referring to the proportion of the sky which is overspread by the darkness of night. The whole sentence is rather obscure.

4. The vernal equinox (see Chap. XXV, 7).

5. Literally, 'and it was arranged'.

6. For the details of these visitations, see Chaps. VI–X.

7. Reading *khûst tôm*; but it may be *hangîdtûm*, 'most turbid, opaque'.

16. And blight<sup>1</sup> was diffused by him over the vegetation, and it withered away immediately.

17. And avarice, want, pain, hunger, disease, lust, and lethargy were diffused by him abroad upon the ox and Gâyôward.

18. Before *his* coming to the ox, Aûharmazd ground up the healing fruit,<sup>2</sup> which some call 'bînâk', small in water openly before *its* eyes, so that *its* damage and discomfort from the calamity (*zanisn*) might be less; and when it became at the same time lean and ill, as *its* breath went forth and it passed away, the ox also spoke thus: 'The cattle are to be created, *and* their work, labour, and care are to be appointed.'

19. And before *his* coming to Gâyôward, Aûharmazd brought forth a sweat upon Gâyôward, so long as he might recite a prayer (*vâg*) of one stanza (*vikast*), moreover, Aûharmazd formed that sweat into the youthful body of a man of fifteen years, radiant *and* tall.

20. When Gâyôward issued from the west he saw the world dark as night, and the earth as though not a needle's point remained *free from* noxious creatures; the *celestial* sphere was in revolution, *and* the sun and moon remained in motion: *and* the world's struggle, owing to the clamour of the Mâzînikân demons,<sup>3</sup> was with the constellations.

21. And the evil spirit thought that the creatures of Aûharmazd were all rendered useless except Gâyôward; and Astô-vidâd<sup>4</sup> with a thousand demons, causers of death, were let forth by him on Gâyôward.

22. But his appointed time had not come, *and* he (Astô-vidâd) obtained no means of noosing (*âvizîdanô*) *him*; as it is said that, when the opposition of the evil spirit came, the period of the life and rule of Gâyôward was appointed for thirty years.

23. After the coming of the adversary he lived thirty years, and Gâyôward spoke thus: 'Although the destroyer *has* come, mankind *will* be my entire race; and this one thing is good, when they perform duty and good works.'

24. And, afterwards, he (the evil spirit) came to fire, and he mingled smoke and darkness with it.

25. The planets, with many demons, dashed against the *celestial* sphere, and they

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1. The word *makhâ*, 'blow, stroke', is a *huzvâris* logogram not found in the glossaries; M6 has *dâr*, 'wood'; but this may be a misreading, due to the original, from which M6 was copied, being difficult to read.

2. The word *mîvang* is an unusual form of *mîvak*, 'fruit'. It is probably to be traced to an Av. *mivangh*, which might mean 'fatness', as Windischmann suggests.

3. The *Mâzainya daêva* of the Avesta, and Mâzendarân demons, or idolaters, of Persian legends.

4. The demon of death, Astô-vidhôtû in the Avesta (Vend. IV, 137, V, 25, 31), who is supposed 'to cast a halter around the necks of the dead to drag them to hell, but if their good works have exceeded their sins they throw off the noose and go to heaven' (Haug's *Essays*, 2nd ed. p. 321). This name is misread Asti-vihâd by Pâzand writers.

mixed the constellations; and the whole creation was as disfigured as though fire disfigured every place and smoke arose over it.

26. And ninety days *and* nights the heavenly angels were contending in the world with the confederate demons of the evil spirit, *and* hurled *them* confounded to hell; and the rampart of the sky was formed so that the adversary should not be able to mingle with it.

27. Hell is in the middle of the earth; there where the evil spirit pierced the earth<sup>1</sup> and rushed in upon it, as all the possessions of the world were changing into duality, *and* persecution, contention, and mingling of high and low became manifest.

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1. See § 13.