



ZOROASTRIANISM AND PARSIISM

by

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stimulating but not always uncontested work of a French scholar of comparative mythology concerning Indo-European culture; R.N. FRYE, *The Heritage of Persia* (1963), concentrates on Zoroaster and the respective religious sources, based on the findings of archaeological and epigraphic investigations; J. GERSHEVITSCH, "Zoroaster's Own Contribution," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 23:12-38 (1964); E. HERZFELD, *Zoroaster and His World* (1947); M. MOLE, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* (1963), upholds certain connections between ritual texts and individual and cosmological eschatology; G. WIDENGREN, *Die Religionen Irans* (1965), by a leading Iranian and Semitist who holds that the Old Testament was influenced by the Zoroastrian religion during the Babylonian Exile of the Jews; R.C. ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (1961), describes the later evolution of Zurvanism and deals with a later stage in the Zoroastrian religion that became the official religion of the Sāsānian period.

(F.K.)

Zoroastrianism and Parsiism

Zoroastrianism is the major ancient, pre-Islāmic religion of Iran. It survives there in isolated areas but also, more prosperously, with the Parsees, or Parsis (hence Parsiism), of India, descendants of immigrants who went there from Iran some time after the Muslim conquest.

NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The ancient Greeks saw in Zoroastrianism the archetype of the dualistic view of the world and of man's destiny. Zoroaster was supposed to have instructed Pythagoras in Babylon and to have inspired the Chaldean doctrines of astrology and magic. It is likely that Zoroastrianism influenced the development of Judaism and the birth of Christianity. The Christians, following a Jewish tradition, identified Zoroaster with Ezekiel, Nimrod, Seth, Balaam, and Baruch, and even, through the latter, with Christ himself. On the other hand, Zoroaster, as the presumed founder of astrology and magic, could be considered the arch-heretic. In more recent times the study of Zoroastrianism has played a decisive part in reconstructing the religion and social structure of the Indo-European peoples.

Though Zoroastrianism was never, even in the thinking of its founder, as aggressively monotheistic as, for instance, Judaism or Islām, it does represent an original attempt at unifying under the worship of one supreme god a polytheistic religion comparable to those of the ancient Greeks, Latins, Indians, and other early peoples.

Its other salient feature, namely dualism, was never understood in an absolute, rigorous fashion. Good and Evil fight an unequal battle in which the former is assured of triumph. God's omnipotence is thus only temporarily limited. In this struggle man must enlist because of his capacity of free choice. He does so with his soul and body, *not* against his body, for the opposition between good and evil is not the same as the one between spirit and matter. Contrary to the Christian or Manichaeic (from Manichaeism—a Hellenistic, dualistic religion founded by the Iranian prophet Mani) attitude, fasting and celibacy are proscribed, except as part of the purificatory ritual. Man's fight has a negative aspect, nonetheless: he must keep himself pure; *i.e.*, avoid defilement by the forces of death, contact with dead matter, etc. Thus Zoroastrian ethics, although in itself lofty and rational, has a ritual aspect that is all-pervading. On the whole, Zoroastrianism is optimistic and has remained so even through the hardship and oppression of its believers.

HISTORY

Pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion. The religion of Iran before the time of Zoroaster is not directly accessible, for there are no reliable sources more ancient than the prophet himself. It has to be studied indirectly on the basis of later documents and by a comparative approach. The language of Iran is closely akin to that of northern India, and hence the people of the two lands probably had common ancestors—the Indo-Iranians, or Aryans. The religion of the latter has been reconstructed by means of common elements contained in the sacred books of Iran and India: mainly the Avesta and the Vedas. Both collec-

tions exhibit the same kind of polytheism, with many of the same gods, notably the Indian Mitra (the Iranian Mithra), the cult of fire, sacrifice by means of a sacred liquor (*soma* in India, in Iran *haoma*), and other parallels. There is, moreover, a list of Aryan gods in a treaty concluded about 1380 BC between the Hittite emperor and the king of Mitanni. The list includes Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra, and the two Nāsatyas. All of these gods also are found in the Vedas, but only the first one in the Avesta, except that Indra and Nāhāithya appear in the Avesta as demons; Varuṇa disappears but may have survived under another name. Important changes, then, must have taken place on the Iranian side, not all of which can be attributed to the prophet.

The Indo-Iranians appear to have distinguished, from among their gods, the *daiva* (an Indo-European term, like Latin *deus*), meaning "heavenly," and the *asura*, a special class with occult powers. This situation was reflected in Vedic India; later on, *asura* came to signify, in Sanskrit, a kind of demon, because of the baleful aspect of the *asura's* invisible power. In Iran the evolution must have been different: the *ahuras* were extolled, to the exclusion of the *daevas*, who were reduced to the rank of demons.

The reformation of Zoroaster. Zoroaster (Zarathushtra) was a priest of a certain *ahura* with the epithet *mazdāh*, "wise," whom Zoroaster mentions once in his hymns with "the [other] *ahuras*." Similarly, Darius I (522-486) and his successors worshipped Auramazda (Ahura Mazdā) "and the other gods who exist" or "Ahura Mazdā, the greatest god." The two historically related facts are evidently parallel: on both sides the rudiments of monotheism are present, though more elaborate with the prophet Zoroaster.

It has not yet been possible to place Zoroaster's hymns, the *Gāthās*, in their historical context. Not a single place or person mentioned in them is known from any other source. Veshtāspa, the prophet's protector, can only be the namesake of the father of Darius, the Achaemenid king. All that may safely be said is that Zoroaster lived somewhere in eastern Iran, far from the civilized world of western Asia, before Iran became unified under Cyrus II the Great. If the Achaemenids ever heard of him, they did not see fit to mention his name in their inscriptions nor did they allude to the beings who surrounded the great god and were later to be called the *amesha spentas*, or "Bounteous Immortals"—an essential feature of Zoroaster's doctrine.

Religion under the Achaemenids was in the hands of the Magi, whom Herodotus describes as a Median tribe with special customs, such as exposing the dead, fighting evil animals, and interpreting dreams. In this case again, the historical connection with Zoroaster—whom Herodotus also ignores—is a hazy one. It is not known when Zoroaster's doctrine reached western Iran, but it must have been before the time of Aristotle (384-322), who alludes to its dualism.

Darius, when he seized power in 522, had to fight a usurper, Gaumata the Magian, who pretended to be Bardiya, the son of Cyrus the Great and brother of the king Cambyses. This Magian had destroyed cultic shrines, *āyadanas*, which Darius restored. One possible explanation of these events is that Gaumata had adopted Zoroastrianism, a doctrine that relied on the allegiance of the common people, and therefore destroyed temples or altars to deities of the nobility. Darius, who owed his throne to the support of some noblemen, could not help favouring their cult, although he adopted Auramazda as a means of unifying his empire.

Xerxes, successor to Darius, mentioned in one of his inscriptions how at a certain (unnamed) place he substituted the worship of Auramazda for that of the *daivas*, which does not mean he opposed the *daeva* cult as such, as a true Zoroastrian would have done, but only that he eradicated somewhere—probably in Babylon—the cult of deities alien to the religion of the *ahuras*. It points to a change of attitude, compared with Cyrus' tolerance of alien religions, such as the Babylonian or the Jewish religions.

From Artaxerxes II (404-359/358) onward, the inscriptions mention, besides Auramazda, Mithra and the god-

Daivas
and
asuras

dess Anahita (Anahit), which proves only a change of emphasis, not the appearance of new deities, who may very well have been implicitly included among Darius' "other gods."

The Arsacid period. In consequence of Alexander's conquest, the Iranian religion was almost totally submerged by the wave of Hellenism. At Susa, for instance, which had been one of the capital cities of the Achaemenids but where the religion of Auramazda was not indigenous, the coinage of the Seleucid and Arsacid periods does not represent a single Iranian deity.

Then the Iranian religion gradually emerged again. In Commagene in the middle of the 1st century BC, gods bear Greek and Iranian names at the same time: Zeus Oromazdes, Apollo Mithra, Helios Hermes, Artagnes Heracles Ares. The first proof of the use of a Zoroastrian calendar, implying the official recognition of Zoroastrianism, is found some 40 years earlier at Nisa (near Ashkhabad in Soviet Turkmenistan). By then some form of orthodoxy must have been established in which Auramazda and the entities (powers surrounding him) adjoin other gods such as Mithra, the Sun, and the Moon.

In Persis (modern Fars), from the beginning of the Christian era to the advent of the Sāsānians (early 3rd century AD), any allusion to the fire cult disappears. The coins seem to indicate, in not showing the fire altar, that the prince had lost interest in the Iranian religion.

The Sāsānian period. With Ardashīr, the future founder of the Sāsānian dynasty, the situation was different; and this may suggest that his religious zeal—as a hereditary priest of Staxr (Istaxr)—may have helped him seize power in his native province, even before he started attacking his Arsacid suzerain, Artabanus V.

Two persons are recorded, in different sources, as helping to establish Zoroastrianism under the first Sāsānians: Kartēr and Tansar. Whereas Kartēr is known through contemporary inscriptions, most of which were written by himself, Tansar (or Tosar) is only remembered in later books. The latter tell us that Tansar, an *ehrpāt*, or theologian, undertook the task, under Ardashīr's command, of collecting the sacred texts and fixing the canon. Kartēr, who was already active under Ardashīr I but more so under Shāpūr and his successors, recounted his brilliant career, which reflects the birth of a hierarchy. He was still an *ehrpāt* under Shāpūr, as he restored the "Mazdean religion . . . in the land of non-Iran reached by the horses and men of the king of kings." Under Hormizd he was made "*magupāt* of Ormazd," a term apparently created for him and meaning "chief of the Magians of Auramazda." Under Bahrām I (AD 273–276), Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, who had enjoyed a degree of tolerance under the two preceding kings, was sacrificed to the interests of Zoroastrianism and died in prison. Bahrām II named Kartēr "Saviour of the Soul of Bahrām," elevated him to the rank of the "grandeess of the realm," and gave him the additional titles of "judge of the empire," "master of rites," and "ruler" of the fire of Anahit-Ardashīr at Staxr and of Anahit the Dame. Promoted to the apex of his career, Kartēr persecuted "Jews, Buddhists, Brahmins, Nasoreans [Judeo-Christians?], Christians, Maktaks [Mandaeans, Manichaeans?], and Zandiks [Mazdean heretics]." Narseh (or Narses; 293–302), who began his struggle for power when Bahrām II was still on the throne, seems to have recovered the title of chief of the Staxr temple that his predecessor and adversary had surrendered to Kartēr. Under Shāpūr II, the high priest Aturpāt, at a council summoned to fix the text of the Avesta, proved the truth of his doctrine by submitting to the ordeal of molten metal poured on his breast and was victorious over all kinds of sectarians and heretics.

Under Bahrām V (420–438), presumably, the title *magupātān magupāt* (chief magus of the chief magi) was created. Under Qobād (or Kavadh; 488–496 and 498/499–531), Iran traversed its gravest social and religious crisis under the impact of Mazdak. This reformer, whose doctrines were partly inspired by those of Mani, was granted an interview by Qobād—as Shāpūr I had received Mani a long time before, but with a more decisive success. Perhaps the king hoped that by abolishing prop-

erty and the family he would reign over a docile mass. The Mazdakites favoured the abolition of all social inequalities, chiefly of private property, the main cause of all hatred. Everything was to be held in common, including women. These views directly threatened the rich as well as the Mazdean clergy, who soon understood this. Qobād was dethroned and replaced by his brother Jāmāsp. After two years in exile, Qobād recovered his throne, but he had been cured of his egalitarian views and decided to liquidate the Mazdakites.

Khosrow I continued the work of his father, Qobād, and thus the Mazdakite upheaval prepared for the advent of a strong state and of an established Mazdean Church. The religious books give to Khosrow the unique title of *Anōshahravan*, "with the immortal soul," probably for having crushed Mazdakism and for enabling the "good religion" to triumph.

Khosrow II (509/591–628) married a Christian woman and may have been a Christian himself. He was superstitious and dabbled in astrology.

Post-Islāmic Iranian Zoroastrianism. Islām won a decisive victory at al-Qādisīyah in 635 over the armies of Yazdegerd III, the last Sāsānid. Islām, in principle, tolerated the ancient religion, but conversions by persuasion or force were massive in many provinces. Zoroastrianism, however, continued to foment rebellion and brought persecutions upon itself. There were pockets of survival, notably in Persis, the ancient centre of the Achaemenian and Sāsānian empires. Books were produced to save the essentials of the religion from a threatened disaster. The disaster did occur but exactly why and how are not known. Zoroastrians, called Gabars by the Muslims, survived in Iran as a persecuted minority in small enclaves at Yazd and Kerman.

The Parsis in India. From the 10th century onward, groups of Zoroastrians emigrated to India, where they found asylum in Gujarāt. Their connection with their coreligionists in Iran seems to have been almost totally broken until the end of the 15th century. Re-established in 1477, the connection was kept up chiefly in the form of an exchange of letters until 1768. Under British rule, the Parsis, who previously had been humble agriculturists, started to enrich themselves through commerce, then through industry. They became a most prosperous and "modern" community. Formerly they had adopted the language (Gujarati) and the dress of their Hindu milieu. Later they adopted British customs, British dress, the education of girls, and the abolition of child marriage. In their enterprises as well as in their charities they followed the example of the West. They now number about 100,000, chiefly in Bombay. From the 19th century on, they were able to help their less favoured brethren in Iran, either through gifts or through intervention with the government.

They also adapted themselves to their Indian culture by minimizing what was repugnant to the Hindus, namely, blood sacrifice; and they surrendered to some extent to the vogue of astrology and to theosophy. On the other hand, ever since they were attacked by Christian missionaries for their dualism, they have been emphasizing the monotheistic aspect of their doctrine.

BELIEFS AND MYTHOLOGY

Sources. Only the hymns, or *Gāthās*, are attributable to Zoroaster. They are written in various metres and in a dialect different from the rest of the Avesta, except for seven chapters, chiefly in prose, that appear to have been composed shortly after the prophet's demise. All these texts are embedded in the *Yasna*, which is one of the main divisions of the Avesta and is recited by the priests during the ceremony of the same name, meaning "sacrifice." The *Visp-rat* ("All the Judges") is a *Yasna* augmented here and there by additional invocations and offerings to the *ratus* (lords) of the different classes of beings. The *Vidēvdāt*, or *Vendidad* ("Law Exposed to the Daevas"), consists of two introductory sections recounting how the law was given to man, followed by 18 sections of rules. The *Siroza* enumerates the deities presiding over the 30 days of the month. The *Yashts* (hymns) are each addressed to one of 21 deities such as Mithra, Anahita, or

Hellenistic syncretism

Mazdak and Mazdakism

The Avesta

Verethraghna. The *Hadhoxt Nask* ("Section Containing Sayings") describes the fate of the soul after death. The *Khūrda*, or Small Avesta, is made up of minor texts.

The Avesta is, therefore, a collection of texts compiled in successive stages until it was completed under the Sāsānians. It was then about four times larger than what has survived. A summary of its 21 books, or *Nasks* (of which only one is preserved as such in the *Vidēvdāt*), is given in one of the main treatises written during the brief Zoroastrian renaissance under Islām in the 9th century; the *Dēnkart*, the "Acts of the Religion." It is written in Pahlavi, the language of the Sāsānians.

Other works in Pahlavi include, besides a translation and commentary on the Avesta, the *Bundahishn* ("Primal Creation"), a cosmology. Most Pahlavi books are anonymous like the *Mēnōk-e khrat* ("Spirit of Wisdom"), a lucid summary of a doctrine based on reason, and the *Book of Artāy Virāf*, which describes Virāf's descent into the netherworld (by means of a narcotic) as well as heaven and hell and the pleasures and pains awaiting the virtuous and the wicked. There are also a few signed works, such as those of the two brothers Zātspram and Mānuschihir, or Mardān-Farrukh's *Shkand-Gumānik Vichār* ("Final Dispelling of Doubts"), an apology of the Mazdean religion directed against Manichaeism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islām.

Finally, there are Zoroastrian books written in Persian, either in verse or prose. The latter include the correspondence exchanged between Zoroastrians of Iran and India and the treatise entitled *Olemā-ye Islām*, "The Doctors of Islām," with decidedly Zurvanite tendencies.

Mithra

God. Zoroaster's silence on Mithra is not easy to interpret. Since this god was closely associated with Varuṇa in India and with Varuṇa's likely substitute in Iran, Zoroaster can hardly have ignored one-half of this divine pair without a definite purpose. Otherwise, it might be presumed that Mithra was included in the formula "Mazdāh and the [other] *ahuras*;" however, Mithra is called in the Later Avesta (non-Gāthic) an *ahura*; so is Apām Napāt, a fire or brightness in the waters, corresponding to the Vedic Apām Napāt. As for Verethraghna (the entity or spirit of victory), it seems that since he took over the function of Indra, who was a *daiva*, he could not be called an *ahura*; but in order to mark his belonging to the world of *ahuras* he was called *ahuradata*, "created by an *ahura*."

It is in the framework of the religion of the *ahuras*, hostile to the cult of the *daevas*, that Zoroaster's message should be understood. He concentrated on his god, the wise Ahura, by means of an escort of entities, the powers of all the other gods, in an array against the forces of evil.

The moral dualism expressed in the opposition Asha-Druj (truth-falsehood) goes back at least to Indo-Iranian times, for the Veda knows it too, in the opposition *ṛta-druh*, although the contrast is not as sharply defined as in the Avesta. Between these two principles, the Twin Spirits made an ominous choice, the Bounteous One becoming in thoughts, words, and deeds a partisan of Asha, *ashavan*, while the other became *dregvant*, partisan of the Druj. After them it was the *daevas*' turn; they all chose wrongly. Ever since, the *daevas* have tried to corrupt man's choice also.

To the army of the *ashavans*, headed by the Bounteous Spirit, was counterposed the host of the *dregvants*, under the Destructive Spirit, Angra Mainyu. Each combatant faced his exact counterpart: the Good Mind opposing the Bad Mind and Aramaiti being countered by Taromaiti.

In this battle, the whole material universe is, through the entities, potentially enrolled, the Bounteous Spirit being the patron of man, Asha of fire, the Good Mind of the Ox, the Dominion of the metals, Aramaiti of the earth, Integrity and Immortality of the waters and plants. Moreover, since the entities are at once divine and human (because both the spiritual and material qualities of man partake of divine), everyone faithful to the wise Ahura can commune with him.

After Zoroaster, considerable changes occurred in the theology he had professed. The entities were reduced to mere deities, which were even separated into male and

female. Never again were their names used to designate human faculties. This is probably a consequence of the resurgence of the ancient gods.

It is not known to what extent Zoroaster's system was meant to be exclusively the cult of Ahura Mazdā. In the Later Avesta all the gods he had ignored emerged again, such as Mithra, Airyaman (whom he had replaced by Sraosha), Anahita, Apām Napāt, Verethraghna, and Vayu. This vast pantheon, still nominally headed by Ahura Mazdā, is similar to the compromise that Darius, according to the interpretation cited above, made between the cult of Auramazda and that of the gods of the nobility.

Not only did Zoroaster's theology thus lose its exclusive position, but an internal change also modified its equilibrium and even threatened its very essence. The Bounteous Spirit was almost completely reabsorbed into Ahura Mazdā. Whereas in a *Yasht* the two Spirits fought each other, in the *Vidēvdāt* Ahura Mazdā and the Destructive Spirit opposed each other by creating, respectively, the good and the bad things. This profoundly affected Zoroaster's system, for Ahura Mazdā could no longer be the father of the Twin Spirits; he now faced, on equal terms so to speak, a sort of antigod. This alteration probably dates back at least to the 4th century BC, for Aristotle said in the *Peri philosophias* ("On Philosophy") that the Magi preached the existence of two principles, Oromasdes and Areimanius.

Cosmogony. In the cosmogony (theory of the origin of the world) as expounded in the *Bundahishn*, Ormazd (Ahura Mazdā) and Ahriman are separated by the void. They seem to have existed from all eternity, when Ahriman's invidious attack initiates the whole process of creation. The question of their origin is ignored, but it was implied, ever since Ormazd had taken the place of his Bounteous Spirit in the struggle against the Destructive Spirit. Since Ahura Mazdā could no longer be the father of the two adversaries, the question of their origin was inevitable.

A solution was provided by Zurvanism; it is Zurvān (Time) who is the father of Ormazd and Ahriman. But this solution completely upset the very essence of Mazdaism and was therefore condemned as heretical. Zurvanism was widely accepted, however, perhaps even prevalent, in Sāsānian times. Traces of Zurvanism are found in Mazdean orthodoxy, some features of which cannot otherwise be explained.

Zurvanism

In Mazdean orthodoxy, when Ormazd created the material world, he first produced from Infinite Light a form of fire, out of which all things were to be born. This form of fire is "bright, white, round, and visible from afar." Gayōmart, the Primal Man, was also conceived as spherical, in the image of the sky. Mānuschihir writes that "Ormazd, the lord of all things, produced from Infinite Light a form of fire whose name was that of Ormazd and whose light was that of fire." This phrase can be accounted for only as a clumsy adaptation of a Zurvanite text that must have said, in effect, Zurvān creates Ormazd.

The Mazdean quaternity can hardly be explained except as an adaptation of the Zurvanite one. The latter is attested in several texts citing, besides Zurvān, three other names given as those of separate gods but that must be hypostases (essences) of the first one, also called in Manichaeism the god with four faces. Among the various forms under which the Zurvanite quaternity manifested itself, the one associating Zurvān with Light, Power, and Wisdom seems to be the origin of the Mazdean quaternity. Ormazd, in the *Bundahishn*, has three other names, namely Time, Space, and Religion. To obtain this quaternity, it was sufficient to replace Zurvān by Time, Light by Space, Wisdom by Religion, and Power by Ormazd and to put the latter at the end of the series.

The Mazdean quaternity is reflected in the calendar at Nisa in 90 BC. The Zurvanite speculation that preceded it probably dates back to the first centuries of the Arsacid period and thus was born in the wake of Hellenism and in connection with the spread of astrology.

Cosmogony. In order to vanquish Ahriman, Ormazd created the world as a battlefield. He knew that this fight

would be limited in time—it would last 9,000 years—and he offered Ahriman a pact to that effect. After they had created their respective material creations, Ahriman's first attack was defeated by Ormazd with the help of the Ahuna Vairya prayer (the most sacred Zoroastrian prayer), and he lay prostrate for another period of 3,000 years, the second in a total of four. At the end of this period he was stirred up by the prostitute (Primal Woman) and went back to the attack, this time in the material universe. He killed the Primal Bull, whose marrow gave birth to the plants and whose semen was collected and purified in the moon, from whence it would produce the useful animals. Ahriman then killed Gayōmart, the Primal Man, whose body produced the metals and whose semen was preserved and purified in the sun. A part of it would produce the rhubarb from which the first human couple would be born.

The first human couple were perverted by Ahriman, and it is only with the advent of Zoroaster, after 3,000 years, that Ahriman's supremacy came to an end. From then on, Ormazd and Ahriman fight on equal terms until Ormazd, at the end of the last period of 3,000 years, finally will triumph.

Concepts of man. The idea of man as a microcosm, already illustrated in the cosmogony, is further developed in the *Bundahishn*.

Since the aggressor's attack, man is mortal. But he does not die altogether. There are five immortal parts in him: *ahu* ("life"), *daēnā* ("religion"), *baodah* ("knowledge"), *urvan* ("soul"), and *fravashi* ("pre-existent souls"). The latter term seems literally to mean "pre-eminent hero." The conception that caused this term to be applied to the "manes" (spirits) or *pitrah* of Iran is that of a defensive, protective power that continues to emanate from a chief even after death. This originally aristocratic notion seems to have been vulgarized in the same way as, in Greece, any dead person came to be considered a hero, or, in Egypt, an Osiris. Zoroaster ignored the *fravashi*, but he was familiar with the *daēnā*. The latter term meant "religion" both in its objective and subjective meaning.

Indian and Iranian beliefs in the afterlife have many features in common, probably dating back to the Indo-Iranian period: a feminine encounter, a bridge with dogs watching it, a heavenly journey. In the ancient Indian texts, the *Upaniṣads*, the soul is welcomed in heaven by 500 *apsares* (cloud maidens). In Iran the soul meets his own religion (*daēnā*) in the form of a beautiful damsel if he has lived justly; otherwise, he meets a hideous hag (see IRANIAN RELIGIONS).

Either before this encounter or after, according to the various texts, the soul must cross a bridge. This, with the young girl and the gods, is attested in India in the Yajurveda and the *Upaniṣads*. In the *Gāthās* it is called the Bridge of the Requirer. It leads the good souls to paradise, but the bad ones fall into hell.

The soul has also to undergo a judgment; it appears before Mithra and his two companions, Sraosha and Rashnu. Finally it ascends through successive stages representing respectively his good thoughts (the stars), good words (the moon), and good deeds (the sun) to the paradise (of infinite lights). In the Veda it is said only that the sojourn of the good deed is beyond the path of the sun. In paradise the soul is led by Vohu Manah, the Good Mind, to the golden throne of Ormazd.

Hell also has, symmetrically, four levels. And there is, for the souls whose good actions exactly balance their evil ones, an intermediate place.

Eschatology. Zoroaster used to invoke saviours who, like the dawns of new days, would come to the world. He hoped himself to be one of them. After his death, the belief in coming saviours developed. Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) was expected to return, if not personally, at least in the form of his three sons who would be born, at intervals of a thousand years, from his semen. The last of these saviours, Astvat-ereta, or justice incarnate, was also simply called the Saviour (Saoshyans).

Only in the Pahlavi books is this theme systematically developed. It is dominated by the idea of a final return to the initial state of things. The first human couple had at

first fed on water, then on plants, on milk, and at last on meat. The people in the last millennia will, at the advent of the three successive saviours, abstain in the reverse order from meat, milk, and plants to keep finally only water. The primeval combatants also have their counterparts at the end of time. The dragon that was killed in order to liberate the imprisoned waters will appear again at the resurrection to be killed by another hero. In a last great struggle, the host of good and the host of evil will vie with each other, and each soldier of Ormazd will defeat and kill his special adversary. This will restore the state of peace that had prevailed initially. The wicked will then submit to an ordeal of molten metal and fire. Fire and Airyaman will cause the metals of the mountains to melt and to flow down as a river of fire. The whole resuscitated mankind must traverse it; it will burn only the wicked, whereas to the just it will be as sweet as warm milk. But the suffering of the wicked will only last three days, after which all mankind will enjoy happiness. On the flattened earth (for the metal will fill in all the valleys), men and women, henceforth shadowless as they are sinless, will taste the bliss of family life. Hell will be sealed forever, and Ahriman will be either powerless or annihilated.

PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONS

Cultic places. Although Herodotus wrote that the Persians had no temples, some have been found, in the shape of terraces or towers or square rooms; also *chahārtāqs* (sacred buildings having four gates or doors) are scattered over most of Iran. Permanent alters exist from the Sāsānian period and are depicted on Sāsānian coins with a burning fire.

The Farnbag, Gushnasp, and Burzen-Mihr fires were connected, respectively, with the priests, the warriors, and the farmers. The Farnbag fire was at first in Khwārezm, until in the 6th century BC, according to tradition, Vesh-tāspa, Zoroaster's protector, transported it to Kabulistan; then Khosrow in the 6th century AD transported it to the ancient sanctuary of Kariyan in Fars. The latter, however, has not yet been identified. The Gushnasp fire, located at Siz, was the ancient fire of the Magi (in Media), but it came to be the symbol of the monarchic and religious unity. The Burzen-Mihr fire never ranked as high as the other two because the peasants, unlike the kings and the clergy, never possessed any sovereignty. Besides these individual designations, the fires were classified according to two categories: the Aduran, village fires; and the Varhran, provincial and royal fires.

Priesthood. The Magians, though not originally Zoroastrian, apparently became acquainted with the prophet's teachings not later than the 4th century BC. They had the monopoly on religion at the Achaemenian court. The term magus was still used in the Arsacid period. Then, under the Sāsānians, a hierarchy developed, with the creation of the *magupat*, or chief of magi, and of its superlative *magupatān magupat* (coined on the model of *shāhanshāh*, "king of kings"). The *ehrpāt*, originally a religious teacher, was especially entrusted with the care of the fire. The modern equivalent of the word, *herbad* or *ervad*, designates a priest of the lower degree, who in the more important ceremonies only acts as the assistant priest. Above him is the *mobed*. Above all of them is the *dastūr*, a kind of bishop, who directs and administers one or more important temples. Priesthood is hereditary, but birth alone is not a sufficient qualification; all priests have to go through one or more ceremonies of investiture over and above those practiced by all the faithful.

Ceremonies. All young Parsis must be initiated when they reach the age of seven (in India) or ten (in Persia). They receive the shirt (*sadre*) and the girdle (*kusti*), which they are to wear their whole life.

There are three types of purification, in order of increasing importance: the *padyab*, or ablution; the *nahn*, or bath; and the *baresnum*, a complicated ritual performed at special places with the participation of a dog—whose left ear is touched by the candidate and whose gaze puts the evil spirits to flight—and lasting several days.

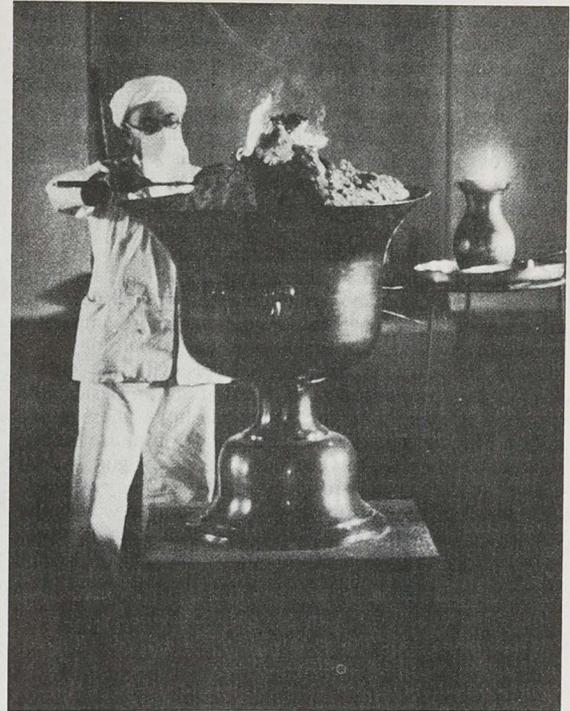
Penance entails reciting the *patet*, the firm resolve not to

Gayō-
mart, the
Primal
Man

The
afterlife

The
sacred
fire

Magians



(Left) Stone relief of the Achaemenid period shows priest wearing mouth cover while presiding at a sacrifice. (Right) Modern Zoroastrian priest wearing similar mouth cover while tending a temple fire.

By courtesy of (left) the Archaeological Museums of Istanbul; photograph (right), Inge Morath—Magnum

sin again, and the confession of sins to a *dastūr* or to an ordinary priest if a *dastūr* is not obtainable.

The chief ceremony, the *Yasna*, essentially a sacrifice of *haoma* (the sacred liquor), is celebrated before the sacred fire with recitation of large parts of the Avesta. There also are offerings of bread and milk and, formerly, of meat or animal fat.

The sacred fire must be kept burning continually and has to be fed at least five times a day. Prayers also are recited five times a day. The founding of a new fire involves a very elaborate ceremony. There are also rites for purification and for regeneration of a fire.

Burial rites. After death, a dog is brought before the corpse; it should preferably be a "four-eyed" dog (*i.e.*, it should have a spot above each eye, as this is said to increase the efficacy of its look). The rite is repeated five times a day. After the first one, fire is brought into the room where it is kept burning until three days after the removal of the corpse to the Tower of Silence. The removal must be done during the daytime.

The interior of the Tower of Silence is built in concentric circles, like Dante's hell except that there are only three circles, one each for men, women, and children. The corpses are exposed there naked. The vultures do not take long—an hour or two at the most—to strip the flesh off the bones, and these, dried by the sun, are later swept into the central well. Formerly the bones were kept in ossuary, the *astodan*, to preserve them from rain and animals.

No less interesting are the rites performed after the funeral. The morning of the fourth day is the most solemn occasion, for it is then that the departed soul reaches the next world and appears before the deities who are to pass judgment over it.

Festivals. Festivals, in which worship is an essential part, are characteristic aspects of Zoroastrianism, a faith that enjoins on man the pleasant duty of being happy. The principal festivals in the Parsi year are the six seasonal festivals, *Gahanbars*, and the days in memory of the dead at year's end. Also, each day of the month and each of the 12 months of the year is dedicated to a deity. The day named after the month is the great feast day of that particular deity.

The New Year festival, *Nōrūz*, is the most joyous and beautiful of Zoroastrian feasts, a spring festival in honour

of Rapithwin, the personification of noonday and summer. The festival to Mithra, or Mehragān, was traditionally an autumn one, as honoured as the spring feast of *Nōrūz*.

Ethics. The precepts of Mazdean ethics focus upon the maintenance of life and the fight against evil. In order to maintain life one must earn one's living by means of cattle raising and agriculture, and one must procreate. To fight against evil is to combat the demons and whatever beings, men or animals, belong to them. The two points of view seem to coincide, considering that the forces of evil are the forces of death: good is opposed to evil as light is to darkness, as life is to nonlife. The life precepts can be transposed into fight precepts; for instance, eating and drinking are interpreted by Zatspram as a struggle against the she-demon Az, "Concupiscence." The two points of view, however, are also contradictory: how can man fight the forces of evil without suppressing certain lives, such as baleful animals? The second viewpoint prevails: Iran ignores, even in theory, the universal respect of life that is preached by Buddhism or that justifies the vegetarian diet of Brahmanic India.

Social reasons (*e.g.*, the desire to maintain family privileges) apparently explain the development of consanguineous marriage, an acute form of endogamy.

Future life should be determined by the balance of the good and evil deeds, words, and thoughts of the whole life. This principle, however, is tempered to allow for human weakness. All faults do not have to be registered or weighed forever on the scales. There are two means of effacing them: confession and the transfer of supererogatory merits (the equivalent of the Roman Catholic "Treasury of Merits" of Christ and the saints). The latter is the justification for the prayers and ceremonies for the departed.

ICONOGRAPHY

There is no Zoroastrian art. Be it in Achaemenid, Arsacid, or Sāsānian period, Iranian art was predominantly royal. Only one god is represented during the first period: Auramazda, as a winged disk hovering above the king. It is known, however that Artaxerxes II introduced statues of Anahita into her temples, after the Greek fashion. In the Arsacid period, Greek models also served for the repre-

sentations of Iranian gods ordered by the kings on reliefs or coins. In the Sāsānian period, deities were represented only in the giving of the royal investiture, as is the case with Ormazd and Anahita at Naqsh-e Rostam, or Ormazd and Mithra at Taq-e Bostan. The frequency of the bull-man in Achaemenid and Sāsānid iconography may be due to the obviously royal character of this personage: on seals he wears a crown, and the Pahlavi text calls him Gopatshāh, "King of Gopat."

RELATION TO OTHER RELIGIONS

The debt of Israel to its Eastern neighbours in religious matters is easy to demonstrate on a few precise points of minor importance but less so in other more important points, such as dualism, angelology, and eschatology.

Isaiah 40–48 offers striking parallels with the *Gāthā* 44:3–5, as has been shown by Morton Smith. Besides the common procedure of rhetorical questions, there is the notion of a god who has created the world and, notably, light and darkness. The very idea of a creator god, even if almost absolutely new in Isaiah, however, may be common to all of the western part of the Semitic world. But the notion that God created light and darkness appears in both prophets. It is true that Zoroaster associates light and darkness only to waking and sleep and that no Iranian text says that God created good and evil. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition, in Isaiah, of light–darkness with good–evil sounds remarkably Iranian.

After the exile, the traditional hope in a messiah-king of the House of David who would re-establish Israel as an independent nation and make it triumph over all enemies gave way gradually to a concept at once more universal and more moral. The salvation of Israel was still essential, but it had to come about in the framework of a general renewal; the appearance of a saviour would mean the end of this world and the birth of a new creation; his judgment of Israel would become a general judgment, dividing mankind into good and evil. This new concept, at once universal and ethical, recalls Iran so strongly that many scholars attribute it to the influence of that country. John R. Hinnells has seen this influence especially in the saviour's defeat of the demons, his gathering of men for the judgment scene, his raising of the dead, and his administration of the judgment. The occasion of this influence, according to Hinnells, may be found in the contacts between the Jews and the Parthians that were initiated in the 2nd century BC but that reached a climax in the middle of the 1st century BC.

Although Pythagoras cannot have been a pupil of Zoroaster, there are striking likenesses of doctrine between Iran and Greece. Anaximander's world picture corresponds to that of the Avesta. Heraclitus seems to have been impressed, in Ephesus, by the practices of the Magi, if not by their theory on the fiery nature of the soul. This would account for the emergence, in 5th-century Greece, of the belief in the heavenly fate of the soul.

The search for an Iranian background to Gnosticism must be placed in a new perspective if the recent view that Gnosticism is really a Christian heresy is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Zoroastrianism is not the purely ethical religion it may at first seem. In practice, despite the doctrine of free choice, a Zoroastrian is so constantly involved in a meticulous struggle against the contamination of death and the thousand causes of defilement, and against the threat, even in his sleep, of ever-present demons, that he does not often believe that he is leading his life freely and morally.

Apart from this attitude, the belief in the power of destiny sometimes culminates in fatalism. The latter is easily associated with Zurvanism, itself sometimes tainted with materialism. In the *Mēnōki Khrat*, it is stated that "though one be armed with the valour and strength of wisdom and knowledge, yet it is not possible to strive against fate."

On the whole, however, as R.C. Zaehner notes, "the theological premisses" of Zoroastrianism "are based on an essentially moralistic view of life."

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(J.D.-G.)

Zürich

The leading industrial and financial centre of Switzerland and that nation's largest city, contemporary Zürich possesses a strong and vivid personality. This derives not only from a magnificent natural Alpine setting but also from the molding of the city's institutions and the character of its people over a long and rich history, a process that witnessed the emergence of Zürich as one of the vital urban centres of modern Europe.

The city lies at the northwestern end of the elongated lake of the same name, where the outflowing Limmat River cuts through the looping ridge of a terminal moraine, a mound of debris marking the path of a glacier that once moved down from the lofty Alps to the north. This site, at 1,332 feet (406 metres) above sea level, was a natural location for a bridge, for the harnessing of waterpower, and for an exchange point for goods transported by both land and water. The site commanded some of the great continental trade routes from Germany and the north to the Alpine passes leading to the Mediterranean Basin. Until well into the 19th century, the city was limited to this ancient site: the old quarters of the city—including the picturesque 16th- and 17th-century riverside guildhouses—and the spacious, clean lines of the modern central business district still nestle there. Extensions of the built-up area have now incorporated one former village after another into the city, which sprawls along both shores of Lake Zürich, across the eastern chain of hills into the neighbouring Glatt Valley, and down the Limmat Valley itself. The thickly forested hills and mountains bounding the valley reach heights of 2,300–2,870 feet (700–875 metres) above sea level and form refreshing green spaces at the edge of the built-up zone. The municipal area today is divided into 12 wards, most of them functioning as successors to the independent unit incorporated in the major annexations of 1893 and 1934. Zürich proper was the home of over 423,000 people by the early 1970s, although its numbers were actually declining as the result of a suburban expansion that gave the whole urban region a population exceeding 719,000. The city is also the capital of the canton of Zürich, and a great manufacturing area producing over a quarter of the Swiss federal gross national product.

History. The first inhabitants of the site were the prehistoric peoples whose settlements of hut dwellings rose from pile foundations driven into the shores of the lake. The Celtic Helvetii founded a community on the right bank of the river; when the Romans conquered this area c. 58 BC, they made the settlement a customs post and Latinized its name, perhaps derived from the Celtic *dur* ("water," or "river place"), to Turicum. They also built a fortified structure that acted as a bridgehead across the river on the left bank.

During the 3rd century, the Christian missionaries Felix and Regula, with their servant Exuperantius, were martyred on the right bank of the river near the present site of the Grossmünster, the city's main cathedral, and the official seal of Zürich still portrays the three saints holding their severed heads in their hands. After the collapse of Rome, the community fell first to the Alamannii from

Founda-
tion and
early
growth

The
Judeo-
Christian
tradition

Influence
on Greek
thought