

Mazdayasni Tit-bits : Behzaad

PERSIAN INFLUENCE

Iran was known to many English writers and poets—Prof. Jackson in his book, "Persia: past and present" writes as follows :

"Persia was hardly known to England before the sixteenth century, yet Chaucer alludes to "Persian blue", "pers" in the Prologue. Among the Elizabethans, Preston dramatized the story of "Cambises", Marlowe has Persian names and Persian scenes in his "Tamburlane" and Shakespear alludes to "Persian Attire" in "King Lear" to a Persian prince in "Merchant of Venice" and to a voyage to Persia in his "Comedy of Errors". Milton summarizes the early history of Persia in the third book of his "Paradise Regained, besides referring to "Ecbatan", "Hispanan," "Jauris" and "Casbeen" in "Paradise Lost." Shelley appears to have a faint reminiscence of the pillared halls at Persepolis in his "Alastor" and Byron in the "Giaour and Landor" in the Gebir hark back to the old zoroastrian faith of Iran..... Persia has influenced English poets, one of the best being Tom Moore, whose Lalla Rookh is full of the melody, perfume, color, beauty, tenderness and tremulous ecstasy which imagination associates with East.

"In the realm of English Prose the two volumes of Persian Tales by Ambrose Philips, after a French version, were widely read in the better part of the eighteenth century, and the familiar Arabian Nights are really largely Persian....."

"One of our American contemporaries, moreover, the novelist, Marion Crauford, chose zoroaster as a character around which to weave a romantic story.

"To Byron, Zoroaster was a "sage"; to Shelley he appeared as "the Magus" or "Earth's dead child and the German writer, "Nietzche" chose to veil his published thoughts under the title THUS SPAKE Zarathushtra'".

'KAVI' THE BLIND 'KARAP' THE DEAF

The words "Kavi" and "Karap" occur in the Paazand prayers of "Ahuramazd Khodaa-ye" which is recited during the Kusti prayers — Prof. Darmesteter explains :—

"The Kavis and the Karapans — the blind and the deaf — are those" who can not see nor hear anything of God": These terms were current in the theological language of the Sasanian times to designate the unbelievers. An edict promulgated by King Yardgard III (5th century A.C.) to make Zoroastrianism the state religion in Armenia had the following words : "You must know that any man who does not follow the religion of Mazda is deaf, blind and deceived by Ahriman's dev's". (Elisaeus, The War of Vartan).

MYSTERIOUS DASSATIR

The book, Dassatir, is a collection of 16 Naamah. Its language is so mysterious that some believe it to be the "Aasmaani Zabaan" (the language of the sky). The names of the Naamahs along with the number of "Varshim (chapters)" are follows :

Naamah	Varshim
1) Mehaabaad	18
2) Jee' afraam	6
3) Shaa' ekaleey	3
4) Yaasaan	5
5) Geelshaa (Kaiyomars)	3
6) Seaaamak	3
7) Hoshang	3
8) Tehmurasp	3
9) Jamsheed	4
10) Fareedun	3
11) Manuchahar	3
12) Kai-Khushrav	3
13) Zarathosht	6
14) Sikandar	3
15) Saasaan I	6
16) Saasaan V	2

MAGAV

The English word "magic" is Iranian in origin. It is derived from the Iranian word, "magi" the Latin plural of "magus". Its Greek equivalent is "magos". The Iranian word is "magu."

The Magi — known among the present Parsees as "magav" — are the persons belonging to the priestly craft in Iran. They are well-known for their saintliness. From the spiritual point of view, they are very well-advanced Souls, and at times, are supposed to be "liberated souls". They profess the Mazdayasni Daena.

Even our Paighaambar Asho Zarathosht has been apostrophised as a "Great Magav". These Magi possess divine power, varying in degrees according to their degree of piety, which enables them to perform miracles in consnanel with

nature. Hence any astonishing performance is denoted as magic in English.

There is a narration in the Holy Bible that three Wise Men from the East who followed a brilliantly lit star and came to Jerusalem. These three were the Magis. Their coming is related to a prophecy which is as follows :—

"And it came to pass, when the Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, a city of Judaca, in the time of Herod, the king : the wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zoradascht, and brought with them offerings."

— The New Testament (Apocrypha)

Some believe that "Zoradascht" may be for "Zarathushtra.



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DARIES

“Daries” were the gold coins minted in Iran about 516 B.C. These were known so because they were in use during the reign of Shah darius. the great of the Achaemenian dynasty.

REZAASHAH PAHLAVI

W.S. Hass was the Educational Adviser to His Imperial Majesty Shah Rezaashah Pahlavi. In his book, “Iran” cpg. 170), he writes.

“Some observers have credited the Shah (Rezaa Shah) with having secretly entertained the idea of reviving eventually the Zoroastrian creed as the official religion while such an assumption does not lack consistency, it carries the Shah’s political and national ideology into a field where he was not sufficiently interested to risk such a momentous changes. It is true that in all his public utterances he avoided speaking of the Islamic period in Persian history; he did not even mention the time of Shah Abbas the great. The peaks of Persian national history to which he was never tired of directing the attention of the people were the Achaemenian and the Saasaanian periods. He chose for his dynasty. the name “Pahlavi” the name given to the Persian spoken during the saasaanian times It would certainly be a grandiose pageant to see the old venerable religion restored to its glory and the handful of Parsis, in every respect the true relics and representatives of Ancient Iran, fully rehabilitated and reinstalled in their hereditary places.”

DOGS

It seems from the ancient records that the ancient Iranians of the Avesta period were chiefly agriculturists or shepherds or cow-herds. The dog, therefore, was their most favourite pet animal. The dog did not only sentinel the house of his master but also kept a sharp eye on his master’s sheep and cattle.

Different types of dogs and of different pedigree had distinct, specific names. A short list appears in the vendidaad text. They are :—

- 1) The shepherd dogs.
- 2) The house dogs.
- 3) The four-eyed dogs.
- 4) Vohunajag (the roaming wild dogs that kill harmful animals).
- 5) Gazoo, A-ivizoo and Vizoo (the non-barking dogs).
- 6) Ta-ooroon (the hunting dogs).
- 7) Udhra (otter, the water-dogs).
- 8) Vanghaapar and Doozak (the dogs living in the shrubs)
- 9) Za-irimyaak (the wild dog).
- 10) The mad dog.

The 13th and the 15th Pargazad (chapters of the Vendidaad give fair warning to those who are negligent towards the dogs and caution them not to harm or kill these useful creatures.

GAYOMARS

Gayomars was the first of all the monarchs that led a Mazdayasni Iranian band and ruled over the territory they inhabited. It is not possible to ascertain whether the land he ruled was exactly the same where present Iran is situated. If not, it makes no difference to our story. This much is certain: the territory Gaiyomars ruled was somewhere in the region known as central Asia — maybe, little further towards the north. He is supposed to have ruled some 10,000 years from now. Therefore, no written account is possible.

According to our sacred Avestic Scriptures, Gaya Marethna — as Gaiyomars is known in the Avesta texts — was the first ruler of Iran. He was the first human being to worship Asho Ahura Mazda and propagate among his men His Message. This he did centuries before the advent of Asho Zarathushtra. He can thus be safely acknowledge as the one who had the good fortune to lay the foundation of the Mazdayasni kingdom. On a vernal equinox day (21st Mar.), Gaiyomars became the king of Iran.

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PAHLAVI ON CROSS

There is a Church at St. Thomas' Mount, Madras, erected in the memory of St. Thomas who was martyred in the first century A. D. There is a cross and a rectangular block of stone bearing some connections with his martyrdom still there. The mystery is that they have set some Pahlavi inscriptions too on the block. Similarly, there is a Pahlavi inscription on the Cross in the Church of Kottayam, Kerala.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL AATAS-KADEH

It is noted that the "Aatash-Kadeh" were all under the government control. Although there were innumerable such "Aatash-Kadeh" during the Saasaanian rule yet each one was registered and the government kept a close watch on its management. A special ministry was created which was known as the "Aatash-hamaar Dabireh" which means Ministry for the management of the Aatash-Kadeh.

SANJAN PILLAR

The idea of setting up a memorial on the spot where the Parsees first settled in India was first made by Mademoiselle Menant, the authoress of "Les Parsis" in her article, "La praise de Sanjan par les Musulmans" in the journal "La Revue du Monde Musulman" (38 Anne Juin No. 6) in 1901. The learned scholar, shams-ul-Uleima Sir Dr. Ervard Jivanji J. Modi drew the attention of some influential Parsees and urged them to do something in this regard.

ZARATHUSHTRA'S VOICE — A LIVING VOICE

"The most important of all outstanding facts of Iranian history is the religious reform brought about by Zarathushtra. There can be hardly any question that he was the first man we know who gave a definitely moral character and direction to religion... Zarathushtra was the first prophet who emancipated religion from the exclusive narrowness of the tribal God, the God of a chosen people and offered it to the

universal man. This is a great fact in the history of religion... Zarathushtra's voice is still living voice, not alone a matter of academic interest for historical scholars who deal with the facts of the past; nor merely the guide of a small community of men in the daily details of their life. Rather, of all teachers, Zarathushtra was the first who addressed his words to all humanity, regardless distance of space or time..."

— Dr. Rabindranath Tagore INDIA AND IRAN

Since the dawn of civilization Iran and India knew of each other's territory. They had a very close political, cultural and trade ties between them. Even in the sacred Avesta scriptures, the land of India is mentioned as the land of "Hapta Hindav" (Sanskrit: Sapta Sindav) — the land of the seven rivers. In those times, the River Indus had seven tributaries: but, at present, it has only five as two of them have since dried up. The cuneiform inscriptions on the mountain-sides engraved during the Achaemenian period record that a part of India — that is, "Hindav" — the part comprising of present day Sind and the Punjab were a part of the vast empire set up by Darius, the Great.

At the time of the Saasaanian rule, the Iranians did not settle in the above-mentioned regions of India but penetrated as far as Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Similarly, many Sanskrit works mention the coming of the Iranians to India not only to conquer but for trade too. They are addressed as "Paarasika" or "Paarthava". Thus, the Iranians and the Indians knew each other very well long, long before the Parsees sought refuge in India after the downfall of the Saasaanian Empire.

It can not be ascertained as to who was first Iranian to set his foot on the Indian soil. It is equally difficult too to ascertain the purpose of his coming. Traditional lore is not unanimous either in their recording.

The Iranian Shaaer-e-Shaaeraan, the poet of poets, Firdausi Tusi, in his immortal epic. Shaahnaamah, notes that Fareedun — in his babyhood — was first to come to India. The wicked ruler of Iran, Zahhaak, wished to kill Fareedun as he was foretold that the baby when he grew up would declare himself as the rightful heir to the throne of Iran and kill Zahhaak, the unlawful occupant of the Iranian crown, mace and throne. So Faraanak, the mother of Fareedun was greatly perturbed over the safety of her child. She entrusted her child to some pious Aabeds of the Daemaavand Koh from where he came to live in the outskirts of India, when he grew up he joined the rebellious

band of the Iranians under the leadership of the iron-monger, Kaaveh, and overthrew Zahhaak and became the ruler of Iran.

According to Abu Fazal, one of the learned men at the court of the Moghul Emperor, Akbar, writes in his Persian book, Ain-i-Akbari, that the first Iranian to set his foot on the Indian soil was Hoshangh, the so-called founder of the first Iranian dynasty which was known as the Peeshdaadian dynasty.

From these and many other recordings as well, one thing becomes clear, that is, Iran and India had close links since ninety to ninety-five centuries back.