

ZOROASTRIAN OCCULT PHILOSOPHY

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Avesta Maga and Magavan

It is generally accepted that Zorathushtra had formed an association or a covenant of his immediate disciples, and it was known as **Maga**, and the members of this association were known as **Magavan**. Besides this, there are other stray references which indicate that throughout the long and chequered history of Zoroastrianism there were such associations of religious dignitaries, who preferred to lead a holy fire in a secluded place, and to work unnoticed by general public.

Stray References

Although there is no historical account of such religious associations, there are some stray but significant hints and suggestion in the form of stray references scattered here and there in Iranian as well as in foreign sources, as noted below :

- (1) Ancient Greek and Roman writers on wisdom and occult powers of the Magi, the Zoroastrian priests.
- (2) Archaeological discoveries of the ruins of the Fire-temples with inner secret chambers.
- (3) Coins of the rulers of Perses (Pars) with Pahalvi legends and fire - symbols even during the hellenized early Parthian period.
- (4) Revival during the later Parthian period under Vologesis I'.
- (5) Revival during the Sassanian times.
- (6) Stray references during the post Sassanian times to :

(a) Zoroastrian centres in mountain-fastnesses in Pars and elsewhere in Iran.

(b) Independent Kingdoms of 'Ispahbads of Khorasan' and.

(c) Priestly Kingdom of Damavand.

(7) Stray references to Zoroastrian priests residing in mountain regions in Iran, and appearing for specific purpose.

(8) Mysterious appearance of some controversial but remarkable books : **Dosatir, Dabistan**, etc.

These references may perhaps appear trivial, but collectively they are not negligible and they cannot be lightly set aside. With the background of these historical and literary references, scattered in various sources, we have to consider the claims of Zoroastrian Occultism, which became manifest in the beginning of this century.

A Remarkable Zoroastrian

In the first decade of this century, a remarkable Zoroastrian appeared in the religious life of the Parsis in India. He was a simple Mr. Behramshah Navroji Shroff, an humble resident of Surat. He was born in Bombay on 3rd August 1858.

During His boyhood he had a defective tongue and he was faltering in his speech. He was an ordinary student of average calibre in his school days, and he learnt up to the fourth standard of the middle school of those days. He had no other education, knowledge, training or experience in religious and secular subjects.