

# Zoroastrianism and the Doctrine of Re-incarnation.

A reply to Dr. J. M. Unvala, M. A., Ph. D. (Heidelberg)'s article in "Jame-Jamshed" dated 29-9-56 under the heading "**Does Zoroastrianism Teach Doctrine of Re-incarnation?**"

*By: Mr. Phiroz Nasarvanji Tavaria*

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The learned Dr. Unvala in his above article seems to have propounded the teachings of Zoroastrianism on the question of Re-incarnation under some mistaken notions and misunderstanding. With due respect to his high learning it becomes necessary to place before the community the pristine teachings of our religion on the subject as expounded in our holy Scriptures, and revealed by the School of Ilm-i-Khshnoom.

Under reason 1: mentioned in his article Dr. Unvala states "Zoroastrianism teaches the doctrine of resurrection-Ristakhiz and Tan-e-Pasin with which the belief in re-incarnation is wholly incompatible. The learned doctor forgets that Ristakhiz lit. meaning 'rising of the dead' and Tan-e-Pasin meaning 'the last body' are the lofty states attainable after the Chinvat Bridge is crossed while we are concerned with the condition after death and the destiny and destination of the unholy Zoroastrians, who are addicted to sins like lust, envy, avarice, sloth; falsehood and the like quite common amongst mankind. Do these also live in a paradisiacal state after death like the holy souls? As for the latter, their own pious life enables them to cross the Bridge and they truly get out of the picture of the material world. All souls in the end will find Resurrection and Tan-e-Pasin, but the souls of the defalcators mentioned above will have to pass through horrors which will be like the molten iron ("Ayangha Khshûsta") poured over the body. The holy Gathas clearly say "the Deaf and the Blind to God's Words shall reside in the world of lies and treachery." This means that souls that are not immune from all or anyone of the said sins will have to return to this material world for purification. Let us now see what the Gathas teach in this connection.

**Gatha: 46, 10.** The holy Prophet distinctly announces, "whoever pious-man or pious-woman practices holiness for holiness' sake (Ashim-Ashai) (each one of) them will I lead across the Chinvat Bridge." From this it is clear that there is no returning for that pious soul to the material world. But the condition is that the departed soul must be a practitioner of holiness for holiness' sake.

**Gatha; 46, 11.** "Keek and Karaf, who having eyes see not, and having ears heed not, who with their evil deeds design, through their authority, destruction of mankind (and) world, go towards Chinvat Bridge, but their abode is for ever in the home of Druj, i.e. evil (Drujo-deman )." This means that though souls of evil Zoroastrians go to the Chinvat Bridge they cannot cross it, but have to return to this world of Druj, which is this material world. Learned Ervad Kavasji Kanga in his foot note under Drujo-deman says, "In Avesta, Daozangha stands for Drujo-deman (see Vand. XIX, 47.)" Daozangha or Persian Duzakh is this material world, where unholy souls suffer groans of distress (Gatha; 53,7).

Duzakh as a separate word means evil existence and is derived from Av. Duzangh (Yt. 19,44) or Daozangh, Pahl. Dushkhan, Doshakhu, all meaning bad life-the bad state of existence, Pazand Duzangh, hell. On p. 42 of "Pâd-ruz" by the late Ustad Saheb Behramshah Shroff, it is said that according to the law of vibratory colours Drujo-deman means the home of Druji. Those who on account of their evil life are to take birth again in this world are known as fit to be consigned to Dozakh or evil existence or fit to take a re-birth. Ordinarily, the station or region at which a sinful soul sentenced for punishment awaits its time is called "Duzakh." But the proper Avesta term for that station is "Apâkhtar" and Pahlavi "Avâkhtar" meaning 'away from the planets and their influences of blissfulness.' Apakhtar is situated towards the north of the Khanirath-Bami, i.e. the earth, because the magnetism of the North Pole has the power of attracting all evil thought-forces which do not belong to the golden mean of different religions, and besides, of attracting unnatural heat, "Harârat-e-Garebia."

**Gatha; 49,11.** Here it is said that (retributive) "evil food will await evil persons, and their home will be the Drujo- deman", i.e. the world of lies, treachery, etc. The evil food abovementioned is determined by the law of "Akem-akâi" i.e. Evil-to-Evil doers (43,5, *ibid.*), and through Thwasha Khadat explained further on.

**Gatha; 51, 13.** Still again it is said here "Whose (evil person's) soul yearns to reach the path of Asha on the famous Chinvat Bridge, but (being unable) rages over its own evil deeds and evil tongue." Thus owing to evil deeds and lies, that soul cannot enter the path leading to the upward holy side of the Chinvat Bridge. It means in other words that soul has to take a re-birth.

Barring extremely rare exceptions all Zoroastrians of today are creators of Druj in their daily life-leading. In the first place the modern living of our people in a city like Bombay is such that even if one wishes eagerly to pass a holy life in thought, word and deed one cannot do so. A Zoroastrian to be called holy for holiness' sake is required to observe scrupulously all the Baj-rites taught by the holy Prophet for observance in daily course of life: for instance, while partaking of food or drink, attending Nature's calls, taking bath, during their "periods" by females, and during certain unholy occasions by males. If we do not or cannot, for one reason or another, observe these rites intended for absolving us from Druj during the above occasions when Druji is spontaneously created, we cannot be called holy Zoroastrians (Na-Gena, Yasna 46, 10). So it is but natural that after death all would go to Chinvat Bridge, but nearly all would return to this material world, which acts as the Druj-alchemizing-Factory through retributive sufferings – in other words we have to take a re-birth.

What is the taste of the dire retributive sufferings would be like is mentioned in

**Gatha; 51, 9.** where it is said ".....Thou, O Mazda, givest the sign through Thy flaming Fire-the molten iron-Thou punisheth the wicked and rewardeth the holy." Here there is a grim warning, metaphorically expressed, that the punishment meted out to the wicked would be like molten iron poured over the body. When a soul is destined to suffer such dreadful punishment, it is sent back to the earth for undergoing the same, i.e., it has to take a re-birth.

**Gatha; 53,7.** Here it is said, "When the inveterate lust or avarice is disemboweled (or rather transmuted into Goodness) and the Evil-Spirit (Mainyush Dregvato) is totally expelled and evil thought extirpated, then will be given the reward of Maga, so endeavour or ye shall have to wail." Maga or Magavship is the holiest and the most exalted state of a human being, in which such a soul (Magavan-33, 7; *ibid.*) is born passionless and is asexual (Vand.IV, 47) because psychical male and female

counterparts of one and the same original whole soul are fused together into one perfected whole soul again. This subject requires further explanation, which cannot be entered into here. It is directly connected with the term "Khaetva-datha" (Yasna; 12,9) which technical term is not at all understood in its original technical and exalted sense by the scholars and savants of the West and the East.

When a person is much addicted to one or more of the vices or sins like anger, hatred, lust, avarice, pride, gluttony, envy, sloth, falsehood and the like, it requires that person to pass through the distilling or purifying process over and over again, in life after life, till contrition dawns on that transgressor, and makes him or her sin-conscious. But Druj is so treacherous and sly, that the human being soon forgets the trials and tribulations undergone and the horrors suffered, and falls a victim again and again into the traps of Druj in each life. Thus after many re-births the victim is fully disillusioned, and musters up fortitude enough to be adamant against the wiles and allurements of Druj. In this way, one has to fight against one's own weaknesses arising out of the five senses, which, as we know, is the most formidable task, and not such as could be conquered in a single life-time, which means one has to pass through many re-births again and again on this earth.

Does Dr. Unvala mean to say that most Zoroastrians are not subject to one or several of the abovesaid sins? And while it is certain they are to a greater or lesser extent, will they not have to go through the rounds of re-births? Does he expect that merely because one is born of Parsi parents, he or she would be absolved from the fundamental arid universal Law of Evolution?

### **"THWASHA-KHADATA "**

**Means Self-Created Rounds (of Rebirth)  
Through Revolutions of Planets (Heavens).**

It is said by the learned Doctor that

"in the whole of the Zoroastrian literature written in Avesta, Pahlavi, Pazand, and modern Persian there is no word for Re-incarnation or any other expression suggesting the idea of re-incarnation."

This is incorrect. There are Thwasha Khadata and the functions of Yazata Pâyû Thworeshtâra. In Vandidad; XIX, 12 the holy Prophet asks Ahura Mazda, "How shall I make the world free from that Druj, from the evil-doer, Angra-Mainyu?" The reply in the next paragraph says, "Seek the help (Nizbayanguha) of the good Mazdadata .....seek the help of "Thwasha-Khadata".

Our scholars do not understand these two technical terms, Mazdadata and Thwasha Khadata, because their Western masters did not and do not understand them. Mazdadata is the deified fundamental law of Nature, commonly known as the Law of Involution which embodies the Law of "Mazdayasni-Daena," the Law of Infoldment of Spirit into Matter. It is in accordance with this Law that we exist on this earth as human beings.

Now about Thwasha Khadata. Thwasha has two meanings- (1) Sky or heaven, and (2) Accelerator or speedifier. Both are derived from Thwakhsh, and connected with the fundamental Plan Divine of Ahunavar (Yasna ; 19) of reclaiming the soul from its errancy. The machinery of planets by their rotations and revolutions and by their

transitions through the signs 'stirs up the qualities or tendencies of a sign and, in combination with their own nature, imparts those vibrations to the earth by means of focus of the angles (aspects) they form with other planets, which may be in other signs.' Thus they create influences by which they act like the "Mills of God" for grinding down the Evil in mankind. As the well-known poet sings:

"Though the Mills of God grind slowly  
They grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience He stands waiting  
With exactness grinds He all."

In this way they help accelerate the abovesaid Ahunavar Plan of transmuting the Evil into Goodness. But mere planetary influences in a single life-time are not enough to bring about the required Reformation of the soul. So the institution of Thwâsha Khadâta by its device of self-created or automatic repetitions of earthly life coupled with the dreadful sufferings to be undergone acts like the flaming fire (Ayangha Khshusta) for the souls in accelerating the transmutation of Druj into Goodness. In this way is Thwâsha Khadâta the speedifier of Nature's Plan and Nature's Economy.

So by the Law of Mazda-data, which embodies "Mazdayasni Daena", i.e. the law of Infoldment of Spirit into Matter, souls trail down to the earth. Then commences the shuttle run of the soul, between this earth, which is the Physical House of Correction, and the respective ultra-physical plane above to which the alien soul belongs for residence after death, or to the septuple sub-regions above the Adairi Dakhyu, (shown in the Chart), in which septuple sub-regions is situated the Chinvat Bridge, where Zoroastrian souls go after death. The name Chinvat is derived from 'Chi'=to select. Hence on the Chinvat Bridge the selection or rejection of the souls takes place (Gatha; 51, 13). The plucked souls come back to the earth after a halt for a certain period in the Apâkhtar abovesaid, finish their terms of rigorous or simple earthly sentence, and go-up and come-down, again and again, during which period they undergo retributive sufferings, widen their self-intelligence (Rae), and get disillusioned of worldly attractions and extirpate the evil element in themselves.

In the end comes the last and the happy renaissance, when the Zoroastrian soul concerned finds this earth a veritable golden shore (Khaniratha Bâmya:Meher Yt. 67), because the earth was the medium for getting deliverance from the Druj through sufferings under the repetitions of Thwâsha Khadâta, re-births over and over again. The holy condition of the soul now enables it to cross the Chinvat Bridge. Here comes the termination of the first of the three stages of Thwâsha Khadâta. In the second stage, the sanctified soul scales to the paradisiacal region of "Pâhlüm- Ahwân" (DK. VII, Intro. 44/iv) or Vahishtem-Ahum. (Vand.; 19, 36; Yasna 9,19). Now the soul is said to have attained to "Ristâ-khiz ", mentioned by the Doctor. Here ends the second stage of Thwâsha Khadâta. In the third stage, the soul enters the six luminous Keshwars situate in the sublime heights of the Nisti, the conglomeration of graded Evanescent worlds. This means a re- birth in fiery body, - "**Mn Aano Aavayd Shudn** " state-so as to be ultimately fit for transfer to the luminous planetary world ("Jirmâni Alam"), though long, long after. Such exalted fiery state of "anâsari" vesture is called "Tan-e-Pasin", the last body, also referred to by the learned Doctor, when the Tanu-physical body is entirely absorbed into its Keherp-subtler body, the latter thereby becoming more and more luminous and self-intelligent and self-radiant. It is this "Tan-e- Pasin" that will become part and parcel of-nay will be transmuted into its owner soul at the time of the latter's final transportation into the "Hasti-e-Dûvam", i.e., Secondary Luminous world of seven planetary Orbs of the Solar System comprising seven Asmâns or Heavens, from which are derived the names of the 7 days of the week used by all

peoples of this world.

## **PAYU THWORESHTARA YAZADS.**

Philological scholars have no idea of the Cosmographical Chart of the Nisti Alam i.e. Evanescent World-Dâmi (Yasna; 43,5), created below the planetary world of the heavens above. Hence they do not understand what Yazads Pâyû Thworeshtâra (Yasna; 57,2) are, and which creation- Dâmàn-is, referred to in that passage. Consequently a Chart is furnished here for ready reference. This Dâmàn is highly complex in pattern and inconceivably huge compared to this earth, which is at its bottom.

Between the planetary world and this Dâmàn technically called "Nisti" or the world full of changes-extends the first "Miswâne-Gātu" (Vand. 19,36; Yt. 1,1) erroneously believed to be Hameshta Gehân from similarity of meanings. Then commences the Nisti proper, composed as it is of the seven Dakhyus (Yt. 10,144) under Mihir Yazad; six out of seven Keshwars (Yt. 10,67) i.e. fiery orbs, where individual souls that have attained "Tan-e-Pasin" dwell; three out of four (Zareh) Zrayangh (Vand.5,16) i.e. huge ocean-like expanses with waves of vibrations (not waves of water) in the top three Dakhyus-and numerous other regions and stations lower down "Upairi-Dakhyu", (which is called the second Miswânē Gātu) – both paradisiacal as well as pertaining to hell (Avākhtar) are situated, as mentioned in Avesta and Pahlavi.

Our soul in its original free state in the planetary heavens was a lustrous essence with deficiency of Divine Knowledge due to Druj or Evil clung to it. To cause transmutation of this Druj or Evil into Goodness, the Dâmàn or Nisti abovementioned is created by Yazads Pâyû and Thworeshtâra. This being not understood in philology, learned Ervad Kanga says (in the footnote under the word Thworeshtara, in his translation of Sarosh Yasht-Vadi).

"This reference seems to be for the two Mino who are Spena Mino and Angre Mino under Dadar Hormazd."..... "Protector and judge, that is, Meher Yazad and Rashne Râst, the dispenser of justice at the Chinvat Bridge (Prof-Jackson)."

In S. B. E. 31, Dr. Mills writes creator with a capital C, which shows that he has mistaken Thworeshtara for the Creator of the Universe. The function of Thworeshtara is to break and remodel and refers to the re-modelling of the subtle and physical bodies of the human souls in the Nisti.

All souls who could not give up and transmute their Evil into Goodness in the planetary heavens, are exiled to the Nisti world for their Reformation. Here in this Nisti, in the nether worlds below the Upairi Dakhyu, souls with Druj do rest after death, and await their time for returning to the earth once again.

Before they come to the earth, each soul gets its own respective share of Good and Evil with which it came down from the heavens. This share is associated with the subtle elemental body-in-the-making in the respective regions above at the time of creation and modelling of that subtle elemental body.

Yazad Thworeshtâra allots and unites with the soul the respective, residue of Evil

belonging to the soul for its Reformation; and Yazad Pāyu, who is the nourisher of the body, furnishes and protects the Good side. Gao, the blissful side of the soul that has already been reformed. Then the soul takes its round of rebirth on this earth (Thwāsha Khadāta Vand. 19.13) in its "Snaithish" (Yasna; 12,9), i.e. instrument of material body, accompanied with its Good and Evil. On the earth the soul undergoes trials and tribulations-retribution-on the principle of "Akem-Akāi (Yasna; 43,5) proportionate to its Evil. Thus Yazad Thworeshtara determines the destiny of the soul, because on the degree of density of Dravāo, Evil, depends the degree of human sufferings.

In this way, in every circuit of life on this earth death-and- rebirth, Yazads Pāyu Thworeshtāra function in each round of rebirth Thwāsha Khadāta.

Returning to Rista-khiz and Tane-Pasin, it may be noted here that the terms "Resurrection-Ristakhiz (Bd. 30) and Tan-e- Pasin" (Bd. 1, 2) referred to by Dr. Unvala are the utmost exalted states of a soul not understood in their true technical significances by the scholars. The first step to these three lofty states is the attainment of the control over the five senses and the crossing of the Chinvat Bridge. Comparatively they refer to the souls that have reached the summit of a high mountain, whereas our souls are at its base. Ristakhiz (Iristekhiz) occurs in the second stage of Thwasha Khadata referred to above. Individual Resurrection or Renovation (Frasho-kereti) manifests itself in a person suffering from, say; the soul- diseases of miserliness, avarice, lust and so on, when he comes to the elevated condition and displays exactly the opposite blissful virtues-that state of change of heart in that person is called individual "Renovation" (Frasho-kereti). The mass Renovation referred to in Zamyād Yt. 89 and the mass Tan-e- Pasin referred to in Bundelesh; 1, 2 will take place in the Cycle of the next Zarvāne Akarne, Boundless Time, (Zamān) Akanarakih (as said in Bd. ibid.) when humanity will have gained control over the five senses, and the world of Druj will be rarefied being no longer in existence in its present Evil- infested condition.

We have thus seen that souls return to this earth for the renunciation of their Druj and for the transmutation of their Evil into Goodness, through the lessons of the retributive punishment-severe or mild-adjusted by the law of Akem-akāi (43, 5; ibid.), i.e. Evil to the Evil souls.

There seems no sensible reason why so much over- enthusiasm should be displayed by the philological school, particularly by Parsi scholars, based as it is, on misconceived ideas against the natural functioning of a universal law whether recognized as metempsychosis, transmigration, re-incarnation, Tanāsakh or re-birth, or whatever other name may be there. We have seen from Gatha: 46, 10 that only the holy are immune from re-birth, because they would be able to cross Chinvat Bridge, while all the rest have to wash their sins on this earth. And because the Veil of Darkness ('Aazāb') does not enable a person to see Nature in its nakedness, that person knows not whither he is rushing, and wastes life after life in idle pursuits, and sways to and fro between "Geti" and "Minoi", the visible material world and the invisible worlds. Will the Zoroastrians who have led a debased type of life not a whit better than that led by the worst of aliens get an exemption certificate as belonging to the 'upper-tens'? The Gathas nowhere display pampering attitude or hold out special boons for Zoroastrians unless they divest themselves of the Druj by their own endeavour (Thwakhsh-Thwāsha), but they (Gathas) unequivocally preach for the holiness of the mind (Vohu Manangh) and the practice of Ashoi, piety. So Zoroastrians must come to this world of Daozangha, the Hell, i.e. this material world till they attain purity and hence it is useless to say, there is no re-birth for Zoroastrians. We have nothing to do with what theosophists believe, but it is quite natural that certain teachings may be common in Zoroastrianism and Theosophy. For instance, if truthfulness is taught in

Theosophy, just as it is in Zoroastrianism, must we denounce Truth for that reason? So we must shun misconceived sentiments and learn facts.

**Ervad Phiroze Masani Possessed Trump card of  
Khshnoom in addition to Philology.**

With respect to the translations of Pazand passages of Dhûp Nirang and the Setâyash-e-Govâd Yazad by the late savant Ervad Phiroze Masani also referred to by Dr. Unvala, it would be well to point out that there are two distinct branches of study of the Zoroastrian religion, namely, (1) Philology which is exoteric and (2) Khshnoomic philosophy, which is esoteric. He alone can be called a true and fully competent student of our religion, who can exegetically translate our holy Scriptural literature and at the same time be an adept of the philosophy of Khshnoom mentioned in the Gathas embodying the knowledge of sciences working behind the Zoroastrian canonical observances and holy ceremonials for the living and the dead. Ervad Phiroze Masani was an adept in both those branches. It may be asked with all humility how anyone can with bare knowledge of philology and no knowledge of philosophy presume to possess the propriety of challenging the rendering of a savant of a calibre out and out higher than his own. That Dr. Unvala has done so is simply uncalled for. Thus it will be understood that his article in Jame-Jamshed was the outcome of the want of exegetical knowledge.

I assure Dr. Unvala that if ever it be in his high fortune that the light of Khshnoom shines in him, as it did in the late Seth Khurshedji Rustamji Cama he will be quite disillusioned of his present idols-of-the mind, which are founded on anything but genuine philosophy. Moreover, the high position which he enjoys as the Principal of the Zarthoshti Madressas demands of him to be fully equipped in knowledge both exoteric and esoteric of the religion. It is understandable that a hundred years ago we may have had reasons to look to philology as the only source of our religion-study, but thanks to the expositions of the Khshnoom philosophy we now know our religion in its pristine purity. Consequently there is no sense in continuing in the same old rut, when philological study of the Avesta can be greatly illuminated and embellished by the help of the Khshnoom line of study at the same time. The days for our Parsi scholars to hang like enclitic particles on the scholars and savants of the West are long past. We can boldly say that we have nothing to learn from those illustrious philologists with respect to the technicalities of the Zoroastrian religion. We have drunk enough of the poison from their conjectural and speculative un-Zoroastrian ideologies. We are now in a position to teach our holy religion in its genuineness to the scholars and savants of the world.

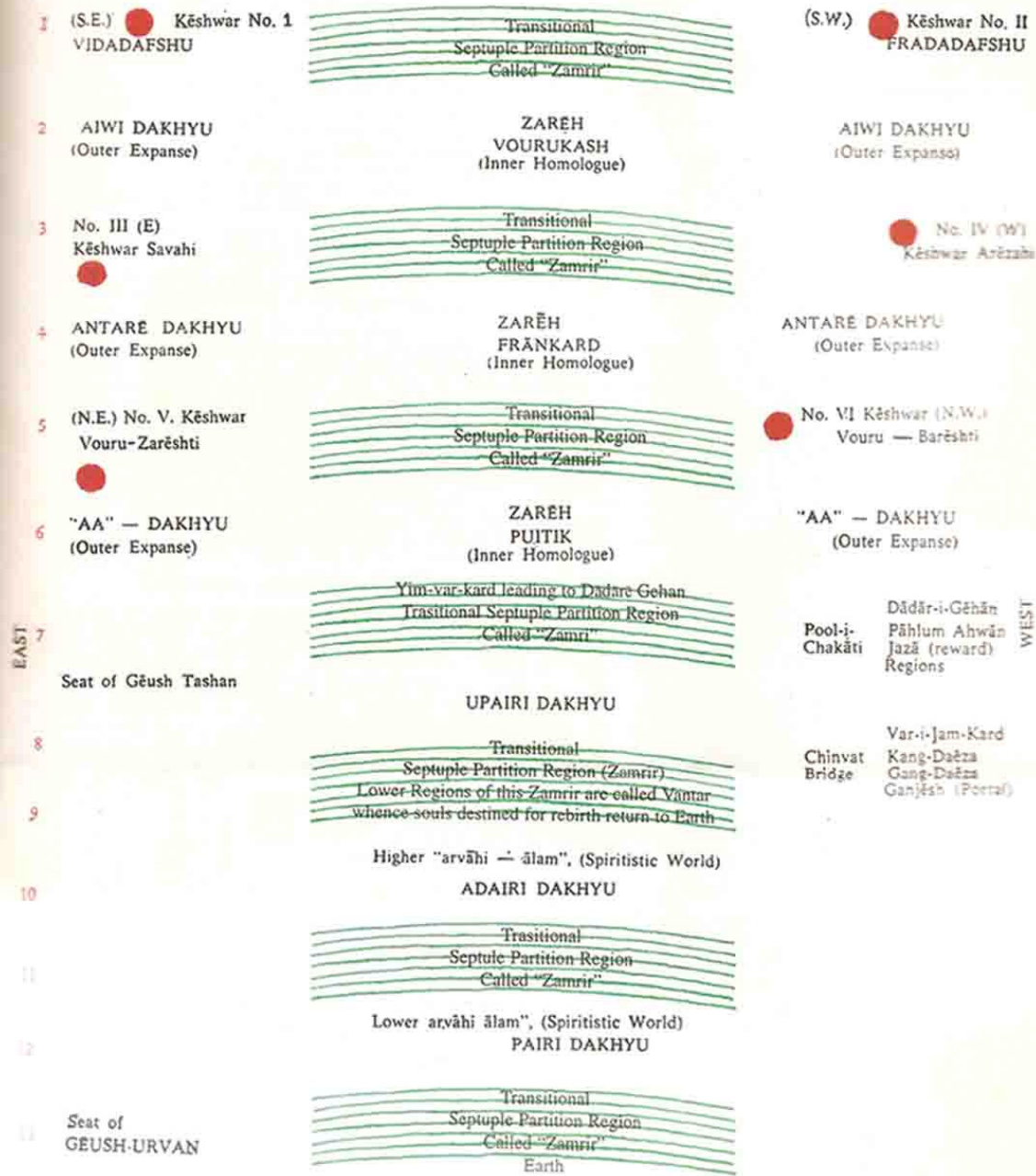
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SOUTH

"Hasti" (Haithyng āstish) - Solar system consisting of astrological Nine Planets or Heavenly Lustrous Orbs

Miswānē Gāṭva Khadāt,

Region dividing Hasti above & Nisti (Dāmi) below where operates fire-energy called Ātash-i-Mino-Karko



Extends partly in lower regions of above Zamir and partly in this aipi Dakhyu

AIPI — DAKHYU

NOTE: In the centre of the Earth are seven Is Jermal Regions (Pāsi)

NORTH



**NOTES:** Keshvars are the residing places for saintly souls referred to in Meher Yasht; 15 (allegorically) as 'gavashayana gavashitimcha', centres and residing places for the 'kine', where 'kine' stands for saintly souls, because they possess blissful characteristics in common with the kine.

'Khanirath Bami' literally meaning 'golden shore' is the seventh Keshvar, which is terrestrial, whence righteous souls (Maabadian) saved from the Deluge and their descendants get easy Emancipation, i.e. deliverance from physical body and hence from rebirths during the (average), period of 27,000 years when Khanirath Bami is snow-free and populated.

Khanirath Bami is located in the Arctic region referred to as 'Thrishva' (Yt. 13,3), literally meaning one-third (section of the earthy globe), which is almost Satanfree. Here is situated 'Airyana Vaeja', where holy Zarathushtra was born.

The joint magnetism from the far heights of the six superetherical Keshvars in six different directions (shown above) from the centre of Khanirath Bami, holds the latter (Khanirath Bami) in its \_position in the cosmos. Hence it is stated in Bundelesh; 11,1 - "... the central (is) Khanirath Bami".

Thus Prof. Zaehner will be able to understand that Khanirath Bami ('Xvaniras') is not 'mythical' (??) 'clime' as imagined by him ("Zurvah..." p. 9 footnote 1), but the seventh terrestrial Keshvar.