



astronomical studies in which, as all writers agree, the Chaldeans, if not founders,¹ were at least typical representatives in the ancient world. That their civilization was so self-conscious and intellectual, may well explain the close connection of their celestial symbolism with personal qualities and emotions. But does the less concentrated pyro-
atry of eastern Iran, which was developed into the religion of Zoroaster, imply a lack of personal self-conscious will? Our whole investigation will be found to show the contrary. If I am not mistaken, the explanation of the difference between these two lines of symbolism lies in the more vigorous sense of liberty, individual and tribal, which distinguished the eastern from the western Iranians, and more particularly the Iranian Aryans from the Turanians and Semites. In the former class of tribes, the will claimed ideal rights for itself; while in the latter, its peculiar intensity, in passion and desire, which made self-control and self-reliance impossible, drove it to worship such ideal rights in some supreme authority, whether in God or man. Thus the western Iranians fell under vast imperial or religious tyrannies. The eastern tribes worshipped a personality in their gods and heroes, reflected from their own; and therefore dependent on their free spirit, rather than suppressing it. This fundamental distinction is of the highest importance, and will, I think, be made fully evident in our future studies. It goes back, on the one hand, to the earliest free Aryan or Indo-Iranian life;² on the other, to the material and subservient civilization of the old Turanian and Cushite races, and to Semitic self-abandonment to the passions.

On this difference of character is based the contrast in the fire-symbolism of eastern and western Iran, not on any such distinction as that of nomadic from settled life. The Bactrian Aryans were led by an inherent individual

¹ As Pliny calls them.

² See the author's *India*, chapter on "Primitive Aryans."



energy, which kept them broken up into heroic tribes, ever standing for their rights, and made the heroic element the all-controlling one in their mythology. Their moral nerve found its adequate symbol in the free flash of fire, rather than in any permanent or fixed image, like the sun, moon, or stars. Fire itself, in its pure universality and freedom, was more to them than any such exclusive embodiment, moored, as it were, in space and form. The very multitude of forms and names under which they celebrated it in their later ritual, indicates the freedom in which the symbol moved. It seems as if this powerful personality pursued its visible counterpart throughout nature, seizing all possible transformations of its substance for its own purposes, resolved to use the symbol, not to be used by it. The Zoroastrian meant by fire whatever was noblest in personal will; and would not allow that it ever destroyed life, even when one was burned to death.¹ It must serve life, not destroy it.

The pure pyrolatry of the East was not therefore a mere crude indeterminate fear before the element of fire, but rather that intuition of its essential symbolic relations which could take up any visible form or phase of it at will, and put religious significance into all. Even in the Vedas the freedom of choice, now described, begins to limit itself; and while the simple fire-churn is still the centre of faith and awe, hymns to the sun occupy a very large place in the imagination of the poet. There can be no question but that in the oldest heroic legends of Persia, which the Shâh-Nâmeh has preserved, and whose leading figures — Yima, Thraëtona, Kereçâçpa, etc., with the conflict against the dragon king Zohâk — are celebrated in the Avesta itself, we have transformations of very old Aryan symbols of the solar fire, in its visible powers and relations, its strife with the rain-cloud and the night.² It is equally

¹ *Vendidad*, v. 30. ² See Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, as referred to further on.



probable that the manifold labors and sufferings of heroes like Rustem and Siâvaksh belong in their original forms to the same solar cycle, and correspond with those of the Greek or Tyrian Heracles (Dionysus). This transformation of the fire-symbol into heroic, rather than contemplative or quiescent, types of divinity illustrates very forcibly that freedom from oppressive limitations which we have already ascribed to the energetic personality of the eastern Iranians. The sun was their typical hero in the fields of heaven. It was Ormuzd casting Ahriman into his native darkness. The later Persians swore by the sun. Its crystal image hung in the royal tent, and the king was called by its name. "From the sun," says the Avesta, "are all things sought that man can desire." Through the whole history of Aryan faith runs also the fire-symbolism of Mithra, beginning in Vedic vagueness, as the kindled fire,¹ but concentrating gradually in itself all noble and spiritual meanings, recognized by the psalmists, which could be represented by the sun, and especially the sovereignty of truth and justice; till, mingling with Chaldean elements, it is all gathered up into the wonderful Mithra-Yasht of the Avesta, unsurpassed in its symbolic expression of duty, love, and power in the life of man. All the Greek authors identify Mithra with the sun. Nor do the stars, individually or as constellations, fail of honor in the Avesta, — all the conscious functions of stellar service freely moving around the element of fire as their common and central force.

The Iranian Aryan was specially gifted with the sense of immediate relation between ideas and things: his main concern was to bring the body into correlation with the mind. This was the sum of Avestan ethics, "pure mind in pure body." Not mind here, body there; not mind above, body below; neither the one nor the other alone living by its own

¹ *Rig-Veda*, v. 3, 1-3. Muir, pt. iv. p. 68.



force, but the one in the other, representing itself by the other. Therefore he thought and lived in symbols of conscious will. Every natural form that could possibly reflect his motive-energy took a typical personality for his imagination. No equal gift of personifying abstract qualities and ideas in visible images, with that displayed in the Avesta, appears in any other Bible of the world.¹ Even the latest construction of the religious cycle, the *Zrovan-akarana*, or "Time without Bounds" of the Sassanian Persians, was the development of a mere category of existence into the supreme personal source of good and evil. The seven *Amesha-spentas* are mostly abstractions turned into gods. Every religious name like *Haoma*, *Vohu-manô*, *Akô-manô*, is at once a personal force and the thing which suggests or typifies such a force.² So with beggary, treachery, poverty, winter, sleep, desire, the evil eye, pride, contempt, disease, etc.³ The whole cosmos, in its multiplicity of active powers, was subjected to apotheosis in the same way. But through all this specialism *pyrolatry* itself, the love of the fire-element itself and for itself, retains its control. The Avestan priest is *Athrava*, "provided with fire." Down to the present day the Pârsis, like their fathers, regard the fire-altar (*Atesh-gâh*), or ever-burning naphtha-spring, the hearth of their faith. They discern Ahuramazda himself, not in the solar orb exclusively, nor in the starry heavens, nor in the lightning, but in *fire*: this is "his son," his "first-born," his "image," his manifested self.⁴ To fire, the Persian kings addressed their prayer before battle; on their death it was solemnly extinguished. For whatever purposes used, even in domestic life, in labor, or in art, it must be brought after a certain period to a holy place, as belonging to Ahuramazda.⁵

¹ See, for illustration, Spiegel's *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 1.

² See Bleek's *Yagna*, ix. note 1.

³ See *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 135; *Vendidad*, xix. 140; ii. 116.

⁴ *Yagna*, iv. 52.

⁵ *Vendidad*, viii.



"Offering and praise I vow to thee, O Fire, son of Ahura! Be thou honored in the dwellings of men! Blessed the man who constantly brings the fuel and the implements of service to thee!

"Mayest thou burn evermore in this house, through the long time, to the resurrection day! Give me swift brightness, food, and means of life! Give me wisdom and prosperity, and readiness of speech! Give my soul sense and understanding ever growing; courage, the ready foot, and swift to move! Give vigilance, abundant posterity, pure and able to bless my house, my clan, my province, my country! Give me knowledge of the better world, of the shining abode! May I reach good reward, and good name, and my soul's bliss!"¹

Other symbols had little value, save as partaking of this, or of what this signified. What attracted Iranian imagination was not any fixed form or function, but pure energy of life and growth, which, as the substance of personality within, sought its own fit outward type in the free element of fire. All its splendid symbolism meant this unquenchable ardor of desire and will. There was the *Cypress*, life irrepressible, flame-like in shape and in persistent upward pressure. It shall be type of immortality. Zarathustra plants it before the fire-temple, and when it has grown majestic, surrounds it with a golden palace like a sheath of flame, and is called to ascend from its boughs to Paradise.² There was the *Pine-cone*, flame-like again, and from perennial fires of growth. This shall be the *Áthrava's* type of life, which he bears to the altar-service. Both these are forms of that clearest symbol of life and progress, the *Tree*; from which man and woman are said in Iranian mythology to have sprung, the two from one stem.³ The *Haoma*, at once divine plant and beautiful youth, is type of the living and saving Word, bringing strength and joy alike to soul and sense, making the poor and rich equal.⁴ It grows in the sea that flows with life fountains, where birds scatter the seeds of life, and the sharp-eyed, swift-winged eagle of

¹ *Yagna*, lxi.

³ *Bundehesh*.

² See Humboldt's *Cosmos* (quoting Firdási), ii. n. 129.

⁴ *Yagna*, x.



wisdom (Simurgh) and the watchful fish protect it from harm.¹ Was it strange that the morning cock and the night-guarding dog should be associated as types with these practical energies? Especially was the bull sacred to this sense of vital forces; and his "soul" pours out prayers to Ahura for protection against the outrages of evil powers.² Above all, the *Ferours* (*Fraoashs*), ideal types of the souls of men, hovering above their heads, were adored for the glory of their light, — pure bodies of flame, and defenders of man against evil; and their title signifies victory and growth.³

Instinctively the Persians transferred to their supreme God that Assyrian symbol of deity, the winged circle enclosing a human figure in vigorous action. The bull with open wings, the eagle with hawk's head, the four-winged cherubim and wheels of the prophet's vision,⁴ were all suited to the vital personality of the Iranian mind, whether of Aryan or Semitic, western or eastern origin; and while the monuments show how readily these were accepted by the Persian "fire-worshipper," from races more inclined than himself to fix the symbol in elaborate forms of art, they all betray limitations in the expression of nerve-energy when contrasted with the unconfined ethereal flame with which he had already satisfied his demand for freedom.

Such was the imagery, æsthetic and religious, with which the eastern Iranians lifted nature to the height of their own intense life of aspiration and will; such the opening stage of those forms of civilization which have followed Iran in giving the same symbolic meaning, in a great variety of

¹ *Yasht* xii. 1; xiv. 29; xvi. 7. Spiegel's *Avesta*, iii. xiv.

² It is his seed that makes Nature's fertility. It is probable that the symbol goes back to the old Aryan storm-cloud. The seed of the bull is the dew. (*Yasht*, vii. 4.) The cry to Ormazd is the roar of the storm conflict. Darmesteter: *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, p. 151.

³ See Neriosengh. Schwend, *Die Mythologie der Perser*, p. 314.

⁴ The angels guarding Paradise, in Genesis, were these Chaldeo-Assyrian creatures.



directions, to their whole social existence. So that we are here met by the spontaneous and child-like poetry of the grandly awakening human consciousness of personal Will, bearing in its bosom the germs of three thousand years of progress. Here are no mere figures of speech selected by the understanding, no allegories consciously constructed, but natural correspondences intuitively recognized. This most responsive symbol, which stirs and waves and flashes to heaven with the motion of the flame within the soul, is the very tongue of prayer, the very garment of praise.

We may theorize as we will on the organic relations between Iranian nerve-force and its physical environment. This at least is certain: Iran was indeed the true fire-temple of Nature, bespread with naphtha springs, meteoric lights, and burning mountains. The mystery of the flame brooded over it and burst from its bosom. To this day the hot winds parch the dry grass till they want but a spark to fan it into flame; and the stars shine through the clear atmosphere with a splendor that seems articulate with spiritual meaning and relation. No religious symbolism could seem more natural or imperative on such a region than that of fire. Yet, as we have seen, special race-qualities greatly contributed to the result. We have seen that the Persians absorbed Assyrian and Babylonian imagery without subordinating their passion for the pure fire-symbol to any of these distinctive models. The reason was, that they represented the Iranian idealism of Will in a freer and more personal form than did the nations farther west. These last, directed by Semitic self-abandonment to sensuous impulse, came to worship will in the form of great religious and political systems of arbitrary power. In the eastern tribes, the preponderance of Aryan energy produced a high degree of individuality. The Aryan held fast to the personal pole of the symbolic process, and used the external object as representative of his own force. The



Semite buried himself in the physical side of the same process, and suffered its organized power to master him. The slavish sensualism of these Semitic cults was illustrated by the golden bed of Bel, spread in the temple at Babylon by his priesthood, for the sacrifice of virginity to their worship of the senses. Assyrian and Babylonian chambers of imagery had become the synonym or type of sensual idolatry in the East, when the Persian entered them from his rude mountains. Upon them, as upon Egyptian polytheistic rites and animal worship, he came down in fires of judgment. He was the iconoclast of religious symbols. In the name of his "living light" he smote down the bull of Egypt and blasted the couch of Bel. He substituted for the older gods of concrete forms ideal genii and immortal powers, — unseen hosts warring for principles in the awful names of good and evil, right and wrong. He suffered no name to stand between him and the Almighty Spirit, whose son and messenger was the living universal flame.¹ In this claim for the free personality of man in his attitude towards forms of the ideal, the eastern Aryan stood alone. Even the Hebrew escaped the common slavery of the Semite to sensuous symbols through his prophets only, and there only partially. When his fetichism and Moloch worship had been developed into Monotheism by an *intense* nationality, even its *intense* sorrows, and the sharp disciplines of its contact with other races and faiths, could not bring Jahvism to recognize the rights of the personal Will. Under the absolutism of its God, the demand for knowledge, the right of ethnic sympathy and expansion became almost null. In his nobler elements, this all-mastering personality represented the

¹ Nothing, I think, can be more erroneous than the statement of Rapp (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix.) that Zoroastrianism never rose beyond the standpoint of immediate naturalism, while Buddhism and Christianity became universal religions. If, as he says, Zoroastrianism was only fitted for Iran (p. 37), this was true only of its peculiar form, not of its essence.



authority of conscience as well as will; but it was conscience raised into a terrible theocracy, in which human freedom was systematically sunk to that degree that a religious reaction to the purely inward law of individuality, without external symbol of the earlier kinds, became a moral necessity: and hence Essenism and Christianity. But Christianity, itself Semitic, substituted a body of equally dominating personal symbols for the old institutional or legal ones, and the authority of the Christ became as exacting a mastership as that of the law. An infinite Ruler of the World, a Jahveh conceived as Father no less than Judge, commissions a Messiah to save the world that should believe in Him, or his Son; to establish conditions of salvation,—moral, spiritual, ecclesiastical. And this personal government of the Christ, this continuation of the objective Semitic monarchy, so controlled the later dogmatics of Christianity that the more or less Aryan element fell into its track; and its exaltation of the man Jesus into Godhood was far from lifting the human personality as such into similar spiritual relations, and so affirming its proper freedom. This exclusiveness of the Christ-symbol the real Aryan element, embodied in science and free thought, has been nearly two thousand years in overcoming.

For the Persian, the individual was the living flame of Ahura, in full and pure communion with His purpose, and like Him master of the fulness of the fire-symbol and its power to consume all the evil in the world. Ahura is indeed *person*, in the fullest sense. He creates the world by His word, like Jahveh, and all theories of cosmic self-development are wholly foreign to the Persian as to the Hebrew or Christian mind. But the human is not so lost in Him as in the terrible Jahveh, whom none can see and live; before whom human will is blasphemy, and the sole right attitude of man that of prostrate abdication of every



claim and right of his own. Ahura is no destroyer *per se*, no mixture of good and evil, but the pure essence of good. It is true, too, that Zarathustra was regarded as a mediator; but it was without touching his purely human nature: he is treated by Ahura simply as one among the children of men.

The Persian, in short, was an influx of human self-assertion; and the religion in which his energy took shape was a flow of spontaneous inward force. When the inevitable period of organization came, absorbing much of this free spirit, and the Âthrava became merged in the Magus (probably first in Media, then in Babylonia), the original impulse revived in the reaction by which the Magi were suppressed and the pure worship of Ahura restored by the great Darius. But of course the tendency of time, ritual, organization, and traditional forms, in Western Asia, was to sink this freedom of the fire-symbol in positive heliolatry. When the sun, as personal symbol, usurped the place of the pure flame of Ahura, Iranian genius had degenerated. This is evident in the national degradation down to Sassanian times. Persian edicts of the fourth and fifth centuries commanded that the sun should be held the highest deity, while water and fire should have inferior service.¹ Christians were persecuted for refusing to perform these rites in Armenia.² In Rome, Julian centred his revival of Paganism in the philosophy which permitted him to call the sun the living image of God, and even God himself.³ But nothing could so fully indicate the disappearance of the pure fire-symbol, and its specially Persian type of personality, as the mad freak of Elagabalus, who worshipped the sun under the form of a black, conical stone.⁴ The old flame-symbol had meant a spiritual power, warring against

¹ Act. Martyr., quoted in Rapp, *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.* xix. 72.

² *History of Vartan*, by Bishop Elisaeus (translated by Newman), p. 9.

³ Gibbon, chap. xxiii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. vi.



evil spirits in Nature and man. It did not so much seek to put God into shape for man, as to put man in the way of participating in God, and aiding His will and work. It was the poetry of aspiration, not the prostration of self-abandonment. Its deity was purpose, will, principle; too free and spiritual to need temples, too personal to want the flesh of sacrifice when he could receive the soul of the victim.¹ Its construction of special rituals and statues grew only by contact with Semitic civilizations.² Nothing can be more free from ceremonialism than the older Gāthās of the Avesta, the earliest literature of the faith. The Persian turned the gods of the West out of doors to confront Nature, and if they could not breathe its fresh air, to die.

¹ Strabo, chap. xv.

² In later times statues were common in Persia. (See *Clem. Homil. ix*.) It is an absurd theory of Spiegel, that Persian hostility to images came from Semitism! (*Erân. Alterth.* i. 393.)



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II.

THE MORAL SENSE.



THE MORAL SENSE.

ELEMENTS OF ITS CULTURE.

THE beginning of personality, — in other words, the consciousness of self as distinct from its surroundings, — is, in a special sense, the advent of the Will as a positive power. It opens the way for transforming inward into outward force, ideas into things. The mental habit of combining the two sides of our being, making ideal use of actual materials, is the condition of progress. Neither an individual, nor a race, nor humanity itself, advances by any other method than that of creating symbols of its own ideal experience in the world of the senses, through the energy of personal will. Of this energy the Iranians were the typical race of the early world, heralds of the will-power which continues to transform Nature into the image of humanity. The rare union of sensuousness with ideality, of physical susceptibility with personal force and earnestness, which we shall find to have distinguished the Persians from the races around them, is the key to their *fire-cultus*, the form of religious symbolism most significant of these qualities. Zoroastrianism makes this element the ideal bond of man with the universe.

Our metaphysical analysis, then, explains the symbolism which so strongly marks the Iranian religions. But symbolism is not the only force which awakes into energy at the advent of the conscious will. Of course, this epoch is the true birth of the Moral Sense also: not of conscience absolutely, but of moral choice as a self-conscious and



creative force. Thus we should expect from the personal qualities of the eastern Iranians that their ideal would centre in moral conflict and discipline. It was in the ferment of their motive-energies that they learned the profound meaning of moral choice,—the balance of the soul and the world 'twixt good and evil. The contrast and conflict of powers in Nature, which had vaguely impressed the desires and fears of mankind, were for them drawn more sharply by the battle of moral forces within. The conscience had awaked with the will, and shared its ardor. When we consider the strength of their impulse to put the ideal into visible and natural life, we shall not be surprised at the part played by moral protest and reaction, even in warring against the outward obstacles in its way. The polarities of light and dark, on which the order of Nature turns, embodied and reflected this strife between the senses and the spirit. This was symbolism in its ideal form. The war of Ormuzd and Ahriman was a war, not of embodied beings, still less of institutions, but of essential principles. It was the substance of their brain, and made the fires that ran along their nerves, back and forth, a battle. They did not build up that terrible Dualism with the speculative intellect. We have little to do here, at least in the earlier stages of the faith, with theological or philosophical systems. It is the articulate voice of the moral alternative, passing judgment upon the world as a whole, rending the elements asunder in a schism of opposing wills. If a race deserves honor in human annals, in proportion to the emphasis it has given to the radical conflict of principles on which moral progress begins, to the practical energy of its effort to meet and solve the antagonisms of experience, a very high place is due to the Persians of the Avesta.

With these Iranian tribes, then, begins the consciousness of a shaping power, through moral conflict, upon Nature



and life, whose epochs are the steps of history through the modern ages. For this force of personal Will was not in the lower races which preceded them in Africa or Asia. It was not in the higher civilizations of India and China, where the predominant place was held, as we have seen, by brain or muscle, abstract thought or concrete work; while in Iran it belonged to the nerve that makes them one, to that motive-force of will which quickens the mind to progress as an ideal aim. With the Iranians begins a poetic ardor for self-discipline, a passion for winning ideal virtue by honest payment of the price. The external circumstances by which these powers were fostered are now to be stated.

These differences between the Indian and Iranian branches of the great Aryan family, after their separation, — the one to the south, the other to the west of their common home on the plateaus of Central Asia, — have been regarded as of a very radical nature. Nothing, it is thought, can explain them, especially those of their religious beliefs, but a bitter schism, resulting in the transformation of the gods of the one race into the demons of the other. But this theory, of which history certainly affords no other evidence than that of language, seems quite unsatisfactory, even on that score. It is sufficient to reply to the few instances given of such reversed meaning in the names of gods, that corresponding changes went on in at least one of these names, and that the most important, in India itself, without revolution, simply through the natural evolution of Vedism into Brahmanism.¹ Words like "Asura" and "Deva," both originally meaning sovereign power, had of course a terrible as well as a friendly side; and in process of time each name would naturally enough

¹ The word "Asura," which first meant "lord" in the highest sense, in Brahmanic times received a bad meaning.



come to be appropriated to the one side or the other, exclusively, without losing that common attribute of power whose elements it had become necessary to distinguish. We have only to suppose that the two branches of the Aryan family, which were removed from each other in space as well as in conditions of growth, assigned the parts thus differently to explain the whole difference in the meanings attached to these words "Asura" and "Deva," in the Veda and the Avesta, respectively.¹ Besides linguistic oppositions, it is true that the two civilizations became subsequently so unlike as to form a striking psychological contrast. But the original resemblances, linguistic and religious, are so numerous that they can be referred only to the common Aryan stock, whose elements of belief became divergent simply under the stress of different climatic and social conditions. Terms expressive of the most important relations continued common to both systems: such as designations of social dignity and national pride (*Ārya*); the priesthood (*Āthrava, Hotar*); the prayer (*Mantra*); the personified offering (*Soma, Haoma*); the Supreme God (*Ahura*, the Indo-Iranian *Asura*, who is certainly the ancient Vedic *Varuna*); the light considered as guardian of truth (*Mithra, Mitrā*, usually connected respectively with *Ahura* and with *Varuna*).² Haug is of opinion that the thirty-three Vedic deities correspond with the thirty-three genii mentioned in the Avesta as surrounding the sacrificial rite.³ And the Vedic ceremonials for the household (in the *Grihya-sūtras*) are strikingly parallel to those in the Avesta of a similar class.⁴ The primary personages

¹ The word *dasyu*, employed in the Vedas to describe conquered enemies, and in the Avesta (*dägyu*) to designate subjects of the nation, is a similar instance of the natural partition of a common meaning, which in this case is that of "subject." See Darmasteter's *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 270, a work in which the theory of a schism is fully disposed of. The Avestan demon, *Indra*, is probably not the Vedic "lightning god," but a different name, *Aindra*. See also Justi.

² See Lassen, i. 319-23.

³ *Essays*, etc., p. 276.

⁴ *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, vii. 527.



of the Avesta legend, —Yima, Thraëtona, Kereçâçpa,—are Vedic in name, have correspondent functions with their Vedic analogues, and are fully shown by these relations to have originated in the solar mythology of the ancestral Aryan race. They were developed types of that conflict of the sun with the cloud-serpent, whose continual repetition made so large a part of the imaginative interest of those early tribes.¹ The preservation of the common conception and of the names associated with it in the myths of both races, proves a continuity of development without break or radical change, from the interpretation of Nature as a physical or cosmical strife to the transfiguration of it with moral and spiritual meaning.

Even that dualism of light and darkness which seems so peculiarly Avestan, is characteristic also of the Vedas. It involves nothing like hostility between the two systems. It is, in fact, the response of Nature to the contrarieties in human experience, as such, which belong to no special race or religion. The oldest faiths rest on the adoration of the light and the dread of the dark; but it was not the outward light and dark that brooded over the soul so much as the antagonism felt within it, giving significance to these symbols for the sense. This the Aryan conceived the more intensely by reason of his peculiar endowments of clear thought and energetic will, comparatively free from those violent emotions which in the Semitic races tended to blur moral outlines and drive blindly from one extreme of susceptibility to another. The exclusively moral interpretation given by the Iranian branch of this ethnic family to the great cosmical antagonism was in accordance with their special genius. But it

¹ See Darmesteter's fine exposition of this point (*Ormazd et Ahriman*). He traces all the elements of Avestan mythology, certainly with great ingenuity, to the old Aryan myth of the storm-cloud (pp. 96-216). Barth (*Revue de l'Histoire de Religion*, i. 116) criticises this theory as too narrow, showing the facility with which all expounding theories can be formed as universal keys to mythology. So Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i. xxiv.



was not unrecognized by the Indian branch also. Not only in the perpetually recurring myth of Indra's war with the cloud-serpent Vritra, in which all moral as well as physical blessings were expected from the pure sunlight, but more especially in Varuṇa and Mitra, the personified bonds of truth and righteousness, typified in the same image, and in the sleepless Ādityas, immortal children of light, from whom came every good and perfect gift,—in all these symbols the conscience of the Vedic worshipper, his ideal of holiness, were the passports to safety, the guard against ill. But the dark power was not here emphasized to the same extent as it is in the Avesta, and hardly rises to the dignity of antagonist. The herdsmen of the Indus felt the light and darkness mainly as the life and death of their cattle, their wealth and poverty, their success and failure in the strifes of rude clans. And as the mighty flow of tropical rivers and the languors of a refulgent clime drew them to a contemplative life, repressing self-assertion and will,—not only the light and the dark, but all other contrasts in experience floated and melted together for the thinker into the one sense of infinite deity, while the masses received their gospel from a slowly developing priesthood. The heroic element also, which though by no means lacking in Hindu life was yet but secondary and left the religious interpretation of Nature to a higher caste, could hardly be expected to work out an ethical symbolism of her grand phenomena through resources of its own.

But the Iranian saw, in the Titanic antithesis on which the universe revolves, *the life and death of character*. Light was truth and immortality; darkness was falsehood and decay. The Avesta shows us a late stage of this conception, after the spaces and spheres had become transparent to the fires of conscience, prompting to escape the bonds of evil service into the liberty of obedience to the ideal.



How far this had entered the life of the people we may not say; but in the oldest Gāthās the evidences of an intense moral earnestness are beyond question. The Dualism of the Aryans was germinant. Mazdeism referred all good and evil to positive principles warring for the possession of the universe. Its defiant protest against the lower nature wrote itself out in what we should call a mystic hieroglyph, were not the feeling too direct and realistic, all over the heavens and earth; so that they could tell but one tale, — the war of truth against falsehood, rightful sovereignty against unrighteous revolt, heaven against hell; and the rolling days and nights were turned into the everlasting Yea and Nay of the soul. The very order of the elements, by which the contrasts are mutually sustained and completed, became the constant reflection of a positive rent in the moral being of man. Here, in the opening of his conscious energies of will, we find the germ of those terrible fictions of a gulf separating him from God on which later theologies, especially Christian, have been founded, and which no mediatorial scheme, in the view of enlightened reason, is competent to span.¹

It is obvious that such consignment as the Avesta makes of half the visible universe to malignant powers, and of the whole to an internecine personal strife between the spirit of good and the spirit of evil, must be of comparatively late origin. Not only does its abstraction of principles from phenomena imply this. That all these shades and degrees of mutual dependence in the phenomena of light and darkness which would naturally establish a certain amount of cordiality between them for the simpler mind, should be effaced in the general battle-array of all-pervading and absolute oppositions, can only be the result of long stages of struggle with natural obstacles. Severe

¹ See the Author's *India*, p. 6.



conditions of social and physical being must have steadily resisted the fulfilment of ideal purpose, and kept it conscious of inward checks and contradictions,—as if some opposing principle exerted a power of will equal to its own, working through inexorable outward forces. To have impregnated all Nature with this personal strife of good and evil for the soul of man, testifies to a developed moral consciousness, which could only have resulted from permanent external conditions of resistance. These conditions are not far to seek.

While the Indian branch of the Aryan family, from causes already given, sank their native energy in overmastering social and religious systems that rivalled the uniformity of Nature, the Iranians doubtless hovered for awhile on the high, cool shelves of the Hindu Koh, whose energizing climate is shown in the well-made, industrious, and spirited Tajiks and Kafirs of modern time,—the true representatives, in speech and physique, of the old Iranian type.¹ Thence they descended into the Bactrian highlands, a rugged region of alternating heat and cold, where climatic contrasts combined with Turanian nomadic tribes to make their agricultural life a constant struggle with enemies both physical and human, in which ceaseless vigilance was the price of victory. On one side the mountain heights and snows; on the other the varieties of soil and scenery that promised due reward to wise choice and determined will. In these cradle-lands of Iranian energy the free Afghan tribes of our day, however degenerated by native feuds and foreign diplomacy, doubtless retain the marks of these old Aryan conditions. Bold, vigorous clans, given to labor, and passionately fond of personal freedom, they are rendered contentious, and even inclined to treachery, by the hard necessities of their life.² The old Iranian tribes had

¹ Hellwald's *Russians in Central Asia*, pp. 97, 101-2; and Hutton: *Central Asia*, p. 257.

² Spiegel: *Eränische Alterthumskunde*, i. 311.



to pay their way by steady labor on a rugged soil. The seasons made its results uncertain, and malice lurked in summer drought and winter storm. The farmer must have one hand free to fight off Turanian marauders; so that the soldier had a social respect in Iran which he could never reach in India. The Aryan will in India bent before gods; in Iran it bloomed into heroes. The primitive man, or king, becomes in Hindu legend Yama, god of the future world; in Iran he is Yima, builder of paradise in the present world: and this thoroughly human master yields at last to the too powerful temptations of success, thereby losing his kingdom. The lie by which Yima fell, ever afterwards the type of all sin for the Persian conscience, was evidently man's infidelity to that implied contract with the stern forces of Nature by which he was obliged to purchase all he possessed by steady toil. The hero of Iranian legend is ever the truth-teller, and his moral power must be as great as his physical. This admiration of truth was probably a measure of the difficulties in the way of maintaining it; perhaps also of its rarity. We are disposed to think that whatever of justice there may be in the reputation of the later Persians for insincerity, in contrast with the constant exaltation of truth and reproof of falsehood in the religious literature of the nation, may have had its origin in the inexorable terms of a strife with Man and Nature which was apt to prove too severe even for a never-forgotten ideal. The strife of petty clans, the law of the stronger, the precariousness of property, the caprice of the climate, the seeming tricks and lapses of Nature from her promises, were all causes of demoralization; while the free spirit of the mountaineer, the personal energy of the race, its habits of industry, and its aim to redeem Nature to productive uses, stimulated honor and faith. These ideals asserted themselves the more strongly for the peril in which they stood, and the constant necessity for their



warning and rebuke. The purely heroic legends, which in Iran take the place occupied in India by dreams of spiritual absorption, even among Kshattriya chieftains of the solar and lunar races, and by rivalries of saints with deities in prayer and penance, are ample evidence of the real and practical stress of this struggle with the conditions of life.

The whole plateau of Iran was as suggestive of the war of elements as it was provocative of human struggle to master them. It is a world of broken, heaving strata, "a Cyclopean workshop,"¹ whose violent contrasts of fertility and desolation are results of the latest convulsions of the planet. Its sharp transitions of temperature and relief might well have seemed pronounced hostilities of will, bits of fixed or capricious purpose, living mutual contradictions set face to face. Here was indeed a theatre for the opening of the historic epos of the human will! A grand natural symbolism of moral conflict, of success and failure, of duty and opportunity, girt by rewards and penalties, prodigality and hopeless waste, was the unwritten Bible of a strife between hostile principles for the mastery of the world: enormous snowy ranges, half-extinct volcanoes, amidst zones of cold;² salt deserts that still close up around Persian towns, and border paradises of verdure and flowers; the mocking mirage, the moving sand-column; hot blasts of summer and sweeping winter storms; luxuriant vales where the rose and nightingale reigned, and barren, waterless reaches that defied culture and awed the husbandman as with colossal hate; insects voracious and poisonous that swarmed in the coast-country to the south,³ and the great Turanian wilderness on the north, with its predatory tribes, — and the eternal march of sun

¹ Gobineau: *Les Perses*, i. 152.

² As old a writer as Justin describes Parthia as possessed by extremes of heat and cold. *Geographical Character of Iran*. MSS. i. 32.

³ Braun: *Gemälde der Mohammedanischen Welt*, pp. 297-350.



and stars through the alternations of day and night, over it all! Here was indeed the fit arena for the hates of Ormuzd and Ahriman; for the war of Mithra, fertilizer of deserts, against the Dævas of darkness and cold; for the holy work of Avesta-saints, the destruction of noxious creatures from the benignant earth! A land, too, for divine legends, where heroism makes the saint. The sand-floods of Gobi have covered hundreds of towns.¹ The volcanic rifts of Daghestan are still a terror to the traveller.² The quicksands of Khorassan swallow caravans in a moment.³ The prodigious vegetation of Mazanderan, land of demonic and magic lore for the Iranian imagination, impenetrable and dank, still propagates disease, and drives the people in summer to the highlands for safety.⁴ One third of Seistan, the home of legendary and epic heroes, is moving sand, the rest a rich mould; and the climate oscillates between violent extremes.⁵ The undulating hills and rich plains of Azerbaijan tremble with subterranean fires, and the sand-storm and naphtha-flame were in very truth pillars of cloud and fire that moved "along the astonished lands."⁶ The fertile oasis of Balkh, "mother of cities," is girt with waterless desert plains, where the fierce Scythian still sweeps over the steppes upon the husbandmen and their villages, like the hordes of demons whom Firdûsî's heroes had to fight. The paradise of Cabul is set amidst the terrors of mountains that frown from a height of eleven thousand feet, and above that rise for eight thousand more, white with eternal frost; relaxing their awful brows as they look down on the "joyousness of silver streams and emerald gardens, glowing beneath a sapphire sky,"⁷ where the first glance of the sun has startled all seeming sterility into instant splendor, like a creative word. In

¹ Hutton: *Central Asia*, p. 348.

² Von Thielmann: *Journey in the Caucasus*.

³ Markham's *Persia*, p. 334.

⁴ Markham's *Persia*, p. 346.

⁵ Ferrier: *Caravan Journeys in Persia*, etc., p. 427.

⁶ See Lesley's Report on Coal (1862).

⁷ Hārīan's Agricultural Report, 1854.



fact, Persia properly has two climates, a warm and a cold, — the narrow, dry, but palmy strip on the southern coast; and the land of passes, to the centre and north, cut by deep gorges and rising into rugged heights,¹ wondrously colored by the living light, or swept by arctic snows. Travellers tell us that no tracks in the world are more difficult than those between the great towns of Persia, across Alpine passes, which only mules can traverse, even after the many ages of civilization that have succeeded each other in the land.² As you approach Persia from the west, you are met by a barrier ten thousand feet high; and through this mountain rampart the resolute and persistent streams fail not to cut their way to the Mesopotamian plains, turning at right angles to their natural course between the limestone ridges, and making for great rifts in the crystalline mass.³ In such wondrous figure does Nature reflect the majestic opening of the history of personality, — another Avesta writ in mountains and floods; first real consciousness of the freedom to choose and to achieve.

Such was the physical environment of the Iranian tribes; such the school of their imagination and conscience. How profound was the effect on both, we may see in that important chapter of the Vendidad, which gives a list of the evils created by Ahriman to infect the different regions of Iran. Whether this curious passage enumerates, as has been generally supposed, the successive migrations of the Aryan tribes, or, as is more probable, the different countries opened to Zoroastrian faith, it at all events describes salient experiences of the people, and shows how closely physical and moral elements were associated in their

¹ Kiepert: *Lehrbuch der Alten Geographie*, p. 63.

² A. Arnold, in *Contemporary Review*, June, 1876.

³ Loftus: *Travels in Chaldaea*, p. 310.



minds. Some of the evils specified are obviously marks of developed forms of religion, with positive rites.

"As the first best of regions, I, Aburamazda, produced *Airyana-Vaejō*, of good capacities. Thereupon, as opposed to it, Angrō-mainyush, the deadly, formed a mighty serpent (storm-cloud) and frost (snow) from the Dævas: ten months of winter and two of summer, and dire disasters from the snow. As the second best, I produced *Gâu*. Thereupon Angrō-mainyush formed a pestilence fatal to cattle. As third, I produced *Marv*, the righteous; then Angrō-mainyush formed war and pillage. As fourth, I produced fortunate *Bâkhdî*, with lofty banner; then Angrō-mainyush formed insects and poisonous plants ["hostile horse-men," — *Harlez*]. As fifth, *Nisâi*; and Angrō-mainyush formed the curse of unbelief. As sixth, *Harôyu* (Herat), the water-diffusing; Angrō-mainyush produced hail and poverty. As seventh, *Vâkereta*; and Angrō-mainyush produced the witch. As eighth, *Urrô*, abounding in pastures; Angrō-mainyush, the curse of devastation ["crimes," — *Harlez*]. As ninth, *Khneîta*; Angrō-mainyush, the inexpiable deeds [of lust] against nature. As tenth, the fortunate *Haragaiti*; Angrō-mainyush, the wickedness of burying the dead. As eleventh, *Haētumat*, the brilliant; Angrō-mainyush, evil sorceries. As twelfth, *Ragha*, with three races; Angrō-mainyush, the curse of over-scepticism. As thirteenth, *Chakhra*, the strong; Angrō-mainyush, the evil deed of burning the dead. As fourteenth, *Varena*; Angrō-mainyush, untimely periods of women (ill-boding omens), and non-Aryan plagues (invasions?). As fifteenth, Land of the Seven Rivers (India); Angrō-mainyush, untimely menstruations and irregular fevers. As sixteenth, those who dwell without ramparts on the sea-coast; Angrō-mainyush, frost from the Dævas." — *Fargard*, i.

The *Zend* commentary adds, "There are other fortunate regions, valleys, hills, and plains."¹

The length of this list of places and evils, its artificial construction, the institutional nature of some of the ills mentioned, and especially the resolution of all this experience into the dual action of principles embodied as persons, indicate a comparatively late origin of the chapter. But its

¹ This translation is from Haug (abridged): *Essays*, etc., pp. 227-230.



testimony to the persistent action of the physical causes above-mentioned is all the more impressive.

Such a process of abstraction and personification could not be the product of an early stage of culture. It is more intellectual than that monotheistic tendency which, both in the Semite and the Aryan, is itself of later origin than polytheism. Its rise in the Iranian tribes, under the conditions now stated, must be explained by the intensity of their imagination and will. It is highly improbable that in the distinct and elaborate form in which we find this conception of a world-strife in the Avesta, and especially in the earliest Gâthâs, it was very widely spread among those tribes. The seat of its elaboration was probably the Bactrian, or eastern borders of Iran; and the manner in which the worshippers of *Daevas*, or false gods, are spoken of points to a reaction on older and less spiritual beliefs. The moral protest that informs it proves a great movement of reformation, to which the name of Zoroaster was attached, but whose roots were in powerful tendencies fostered by the physical and social causes we have thus far traced.



CSL

DEVELOPMENT.



I.

AVESTAN DUALISM.



AVESTAN DUALISM.

OF the long process by which this spiritual and moral dualism was wrought out, history gives little record. When we first find the faith of Zoroaster, the old fire-cultus has found a twofold personality, the substance of which is this: Ahuramazda,—“the living creator,”¹ “all-wise Lord,”² “source of light for the world,”³ “creator of the stars by his inborn fire” (or “mingling glory with the lights”⁴), and “by his intellect, of the good creatures, ruled by the *inborn* good mind (*Vohu-manô*), Thou, heavenly Mazda, makest them grow,”⁵ “giving with hands full of help to the good,” “by the warmth of his pure fire strengthening the good things,”⁶ “creator of all good through the tongue of the good mind,” “father of all rectitude” (or “purity”⁷) in thought, word, and deed, “appearing in best thought and rectitude,” “giving perfection, immortality, wealth, and devotion,”⁸—is opposed at every point by Angrô-mainyus, “the hurtful spirit,”⁹ or “the evil mind” (*Akem-manô*), “spirit of lies” or destruction, who poisons the mind with his impurity of thought, word, and deed. The one creates all that works for the good of man, physical and moral; the other in pure moral opposition, and at the same time, produces all evil thoughts and things. *Thus all things have their moral and physical contraries in one.*

¹ Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 302.

² *Yacna*, xliii. 2; Haug.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxi. 7; Haug.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xlii. 2; Spiegel.

⁵ Spiegel: *Avesta*, Bd. iii., Einleitung, i.

⁶ *Yacna*, xxxi. 7; Spiegel.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xliii. 4; Haug.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xlvii. 1 and 2; Haug.

⁹ Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 304.



These two spirits or principles are called primeval *twins*; nor is there any distinction affirmed as to their origin. Good and evil, right and wrong, exist before them in the nature of things, it would seem; since they are said to have chosen between these, each his own part according to its wisdom or its folly, its truth or falsehood.¹ They simply are here, stand before the soul, and it must choose between them. It takes its part and pays its vows. These two united have created the facts of "life, death, and how the world shall be."² The increaser says to the destroyer, "Neither our thoughts, doctrines, wills, vows, words, acts, laws, nor our souls agree."³ The soul of a man cannot belong to both: "May we be such as help the renovation of the world, and the wise spirits shall help us. This is to be united with wisdom."⁴ "Ahuramazda hears the helpers of good. May he guide me by his perfect wisdom!" "May thy kingdom come! O Ahura, give good to the pure man who lives righteously."⁵ "So falls on the powers of falsehood (*Drujô*) annihilation. They who enlarge the glory of the good pass to the abode of the good mind (*Vohu-manô*), of the wise (*Mazda*), of the righteous (*Asha*)."⁶ "Therefore perform the commandments which Mazda has given to men; for they are the perdition of the wicked, but profit to the pure, the fountain of happiness."⁷ "To the good the spirit of the earth tells the everlasting laws given by thy intellect, which none can abolish"⁸ (or "deceive"⁹).

Somehow by the very coming of good things come their negations, fired with living hate. "Ahriman bored

¹ *Yacna*, xxx. 5; Spiegel and Harlez. Haug translates "one created *reality*; the other, *non-reality*," by which term he cannot mean nothingness, but falsehood.

² *Yacna*, xxx. 3 and 4.

³ *Yacna*, xlv. 2. Haug, who does not think the two essentially opposed, translates "do not all these things follow us?" *Yacna*, xlv. 2.

⁴ *Yacna*, xxx. 9; Haug, Harlez, Spiegel.

⁵ *Yacna*, lii. 9.

⁶ *Yacna*, xxx. 10; Spiegel. Haug says, "All perfect things are gathered there."

⁷ *Yacna*, xxx. 11.

⁸ *Yacna*, xlii. 6; Haug.

⁹ Harlez.



through the earth," says the Bundelesh, "so that it was rent by lies and strife, and at midday was dark as night."¹ Powers of good, spiritual and holy, sometimes represented as qualities, sometimes almost personal (on the verge of becoming so at least, the idea hovering between these on the wings of the imagination and feeling), aid Ahuramazda and his good souls. Embattled hosts, forces of fraud, falsehood, destruction (*Daēuā*), war in the elements against them, to be resisted by prayer, by vows, by abjurations of their service, by praises of the best, and by good thoughts, words, and deeds. Indispensable is industry, raising cattle for food and wealth and progeny. "In Ahuramazda was the earth-spirit (*Ārmaiti*), in him the spirit that formed the cow when he made her paths that she might go from the tiller of the soil to him who does not cultivate it."² "Of these two, she prefers him who cultivates with care filled by the good spirit. But he who does not till her, but worships the Daevas, has no share in her good tidings."³ Ahura protects the settled life of the (shepherd or) tiller. "Listen not to the teachings of the wicked [robber tribes, doubtless], for he gives to destruction house, village, district, province; but kill them with the sword," or "drive them away with strokes."⁴ "The wicked," says Zoroaster, "protect those who oppose the holy and forbid the cattle to roam through the lands; whoever drives them out [foes of agriculture] follows the ways of wisdom in what concerns the herds."⁵

These passages certainly seem to refer to the herdsman's life as opposed to that of the wild brigand, or nomad in the worst sense. Harlez does not think it means anything like settled agricultural industry.⁶ So Spiegel. Haug's translations are free and bold, and cover fixed settlements. But

¹ *Bundelesh*. Justi, chap. iii.

² *Yagna*, xxxi. 9; Haug: "to call upon him to till the soil."

³ *Yagna*, xxxi. 10; Haug.

⁴ *Yagna*, xxxi. 18.

⁵ *Yagna*, xlv.; Harlez.

⁶ *Avastā*, ii. 28.



at all events it is *industry* that is enforced as against *idleness*, amidst severe discouragements from foes human or demoniac, or both. "Whoso cares for the cattle with diligence is in the service of the good mind,"¹ or "shall inhabit the fields of the righteous and good"² (that is, paradise). *These wicked interlopers must not be spared.* "I will remove from thy community disobedience and the evil mind, the despising of relationship, the Druj nearest the work [that is, idleness], the disdainer of obedience, the bad measure of the fodder of the cattle."³ It is difficult to understand who were the Daeva-worshippers who belonged to the army of Ahriman. In a confession of faith, which is evidently of later origin than what has already been quoted as Zoroastrian, they are spoken of as sorcerers and robbers (of the earth, or cattle), and as doing damage to the quarters, or clans, of the true worshippers.⁴ The Avesta gives no account of the origin of these unbelieving tribes. They are taken as existing facts, known as children of Ahriman by their unbelief in the pure law and their corresponding habits,—just as the Zoroastrians were known as of Ahura's creation by their creed and conduct. It should seem that they were Ahriman's offset to the humanity produced by the Good Principle. As the Daevas are positively said to be propagators of lies and unbelief, something of a speculative nature probably entered into the grounds of strife.

But that the sense of moral reprobation had at least as much to do with it as a difference of creed is evident from the stress laid on personal character, and the root of the dualism itself in thoroughly ethical contrasts. This service of Ahura, this hate of Ahriman, is a living fire; the symbol has mounted to the heavens of conduct. And if the infidel is hateful because he rejects the holy law, the

¹ *Yagna*, xxxiii. 3; Spiegel.

² *Ibid.*, xxxiii. 4; Spiegel.

³ *Yagna*, xxxiii. 3; Haug.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xii. ; Haug. Were they Turanian raiders?



law itself is holy only because it commands things manly, becoming, just, and helpful, — which things to hate and persecute *is* infidelity.

Let it be noted, then, that whatever the original germs in natural phenomena out of which this dualistic personification was evolved, its substance is the moral earnestness of personal will. As we go on to those portions of the Avesta which represent a later stage of it than Zoroaster's Gâthâs, we find the usual twofold evolution, of extensive application on the one hand, and intensive confinement on the other. The hosts of spiritual forces, good and evil, multiply around the central ideas of righteousness and iniquity; while the saving warfare tends to run down into the narrow ruts of petty ritualism. From the oldest and simplest Gâthâs down to the latest Yashts must have required nearly a thousand years of growth;¹ and not only do the details of religious personification accumulate to the last,² but the wearisome iteration of names and powers in the prayers and praises of the ritual, and of symbolical gestures and forms of purification, and the comminutia of religious service upon all the various kinds of waters and fires, come to surpass all other known rites, till the fire on the altar has survived the spirit of the rite, and Zoroastrianism remains a monument of the self-destructiveness of personal worship. But for a time this evolution of Dualism was a form of living purpose, pressing into universal meaning, and inflaming all Nature with its fiery spirit. The Aryan instinctively passed from the abstract to the concrete, and the moral quality was sure to identify itself with some material relation. In the Vendidad (or law for expelling Daevas), still more in the Yashts (prayers and praises with legends), the objects and qualities at first blended in the substance of Ahura and his work became

¹ 1200-400 B.C. Haug: *Essays*, etc., 262-65.

² Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. and *Avesta*, Bd. iii., Einleitung, describes them all.



positive persons, — “multiplications” of him;¹ “beneficent immortals;” like the Vedic Ādityas. These were: Vohu-manô (the good mind); Asha-vahista (best purity);² Khshathra-vairya, wealth-giver (desired kingdom);³ Ârmaiti (spirit of earth, or obedience); “all of like mind, speech, action, like their father and maker; each beholding the soul of another, meditating the best life.”⁴ Add to these, Haurvatât and Ameretât (health and immortality), and we have, with Ahura himself, the sevenfold personality of righteousness, against which are drawn up Ahriman and his six spirits of evil, — will against will. Later, these powers that work good become distributed through the material world as presiding genii over animals, healing plants, remedies, metals, food, — all things from which benefit was derived.⁵ The pure order of worship, embodied in the sacrifice, as Haoma, becomes a beautiful youth, who stands by Zoroaster in the flame to protect and teach him.⁶ And the very sentences of holy writ (*Ahuna-vairya*) are no less than a divine being, forever victorious (*Honovar*). Then come hosts of Yazatas and Fravashis, genii, and spirits of the just, or the higher selves of good men, hovering over their conflict of good and evil, watchers and guardians of the right, — for these ideal souls are all on the side of good, and are invoked individually by the names of good men, by the hundred and thousand at a time, covering surely a long history, of which we know no more;⁷ and against these, innumerable Daevas, Yâtus, Drujas, personified evil habits, diseases, monstrosities, or other horror in the phenomena of Nature or the imagination of man.⁸ And the good spirits gather about the eastern mountain Albôrz (*Hara-berezaiti*), the world-centre,

¹ Darmesteter: *Ormand et Ahriman*, p. 43.

² Hang, 306.

³ Perfect king, Harlez.

⁴ *Fravardin Yasht*, 83, 84.

⁵ Darmesteter: *Haurvatât et Ameretât*.

⁶ *Yasna*, ix.

⁷ See Boissier: *Religion Romaine*, ii. 131. *Fravardin Yasht*.

⁸ See Harlez: *Avesta*, i. 43.



whence Mithra rises with his horses of the Dawn to give light and safety to the world, where there is no night, nor cold, nor heat.¹ And the demons gather at *Arezūra*, the world of darkness, and the gate of hell.²

To these personal antagonisms correspond physical ones,—happy cultivated lands of believers, loved of the earth, and of Ahura, and helped by all useful creatures, the cow, the cock, the dog, the ox, on one side; and on the other, rude wastes, noxious creatures, dark and deadly forces, like storms and droughts, and scourges that can and must be expelled from the holy earth.

“Who rejoices the earth, O Ahura?—He who adorns it with grain and grass, and fruit-trees; who dries the moist lands, and waters the dry places.”

“Whoso cultivates barley, cultivates virtue. When the wheat appears, the demons hiss; when sprouts come, they whine; when the stalks stand up, they cry; and when the grain is in ear, they flee in rage and despair.”

“The earth must not lie untilled, but be ploughed, that she may be no longer childless, but produce bulls for man, and be their beautiful dwelling-place. Whoever tills her with both hands, to him she bears fruit, as a lover brings a son to her beloved. Whoever tills her not, to him she says, ‘Thou shalt stand at another’s gate begging food of those who have much.’”³

To destroy noxious insects is the penance for sins. Plant the wilderness, drain the marsh, turn streams into the sands, raise flocks and herds, is the battle-cry of this race that goes forth to possess the world and conquer evil by force of productive work. The sun in his victorious course, dispelling darkness and turning death to life, was the eternal monitor to this human war. And the helpers were ever at hand.

“Praise to thee, O holy Bull, who givest increase; praise to thee, gift of the Creator for the pure who are yet unborn! Rise, O Clouds,

¹ *Mīhr-Yasht*.

² *Vendidad*, xix. 140-147.

³ *Vendidad*, iii. 11-14; 99-108; 79-95.



come ! let the waters fall and spread abroad, thousand ten thousand-fold waves, to destroy disease and death ! Rise, O Sun, with swift steeds over Albôrz, and illumine the creatures, on the path which Ahura hath made ! The holy word says, ' I will consecrate thy birth and growth, thy body and strength ; will make thee rich in children, in milk and fatness, in the cattle which roam the fields. Rise, O Moon, that holdest the germs of the herds !¹ Rise, O splendid Stars [or, hid in depths], ye who hold the seed of the rain.'²

The stars fight in their courses against Ahriman. The battle of the star Tistrya with the demon Apaosha (or the drought), as two horses, in the great sea Vouru-kasha,³ is the old storm-myth of the Vedas, expanded and endowed with higher meaning. On the other hand, the later mythology, probably under Semitic influence, treats the seven planets in the old Chaldean fashion, as evil powers warring on the orderly constellations, which they seemed to invade like roving nomads with their ever-varying aspects and moods.⁴ The earth itself, as the soul of the primal Bull, makes complaint to Ahuramazda that it is torn in pieces ; to which Ahura replies that this (which means ploughing) is for the sake of harvests for man ; and Zarathustra is bidden to teach this gospel.⁵ Perhaps the soul of the Bull is not the earth, but the cattle themselves,⁶ the useful brute creation, whose weal and woe are matters of profoundest interest for this religion. From the seed of the slain Bull (slain by Ahriman) come, in the later myth, the progenitors of all animals and plants.⁷ Animals are pure or impure, by rigid rule ; but their relation to good and evil is determined not so much by their moral as by their physical qualities ; often by some obscure or incidental association, or by transference from the old Aryan myth of the elemental strife, — as in the case of the beaver, by the

¹ The dawn.

² *Yendidad*, xxi.

³ The atmosphere (Darmesteter).

⁴ *Minolthired*, viii. 1 ; *Bundehesh*, v.

⁵ *Yacna*, xxix. ; Haug. The *Bundehesh* says it was comforted by being shown the Ferozer of Zarathustra (chap. iv.).

⁶ This is Roth's view ; the other is Haug's.

⁷ *Bundehesh*, chap. x.



resemblance of his color to that of the light in the cloud;¹ or of the ant, by that of the cloud to an ant-hill, covering up a swarming life;² or of serpent-like animals in general, which inherit the bad name of the ancient cloud-serpent.³ Ardvī-çûra, the strong healer, pours her waters for the relief of men and heroes. Saviors from disease and death are running streams and growing trees. The Bundelesh makes a mighty rain from heaven destroy evil creatures and Tistrya take the form of a white horse to remove the poisonous smell of their dead bodies.⁴ But whatever the origin of these notions about certain classes of animals, such is the force of religious association that most of these impure creations are regarded by the later Pârsis as really injurious.⁵ As in other religions, traditional doctrine had to be reconciled with facts by feats of accommodation. The Bundelesh, which classes animals by external characters, — mostly arbitrary and accidental ones, — makes Ahura say to the falcon, who, as the lightning, is one of his creation: "You do Ahriman's will rather than mine, since you destroy so many smaller birds. But if I had not made you, Ahriman would have done so, and made you so great that no small bird could have lived."⁶ Ahriman made the peacock a harmless bird; but it was only to show that he could make a good thing. All growing things were for man's use. The great waters, which the star Tistrya had to win from the evil demon by a terrible struggle, held the seeds of all plants, which fall in the rain upon the earth; and ten thousand of them are for the healing of as many diseases.⁷ Haoma, death-dispelling, shall refresh the immortals. Every flower belongs to a

¹ Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 281, — again the old storm-myth.

² See *Rig-Veda*, iv. 19, 9.

³ Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 282-83. These explanations, however apparently fanciful, have undoubtedly very strong foundations in mythological evolution.

⁴ *Bundelesh*, vii.

⁵ Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 285.

⁶ Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 286; *Bundelesh*, xiv.

⁷ *Bundelesh*, ix.



guardian god.¹ Seventeen kinds of water were purified by Zoroaster.² Into the great sea there run a hundred thousand golden conduits from the mountain at the earth's centre (*Hara-beresaiti*), and the earth is fertilized, in aid of human toil, by streams and seas.³ "Slowly through ages rises the great mountain to the everlasting Light," and two thousand mountains spring from it to hold the earth firm.⁴

The paradise of the Avesta is the transfiguration of labor. It is a region of nine hundred kingdoms, full of cattle, beasts of burden, watch-dogs, and ruddy flames. The weapons of Yima are a golden spear, for piercing the earth; also a golden plough (perhaps shovel): with these he brings forth its fruits, expanding it threefold.⁵ Work was the true "purification,"—live work of men on Nature. The facts of the world were not to be dodged; the senses were not to be ignored. The material was not put over against the spiritual as essentially evil. The good Ahura had made good things, and good laws for expanding their area by complying with their conditions and paying their price. There stands the world, visible as the fire that animates it,—our battle-ground to be redeemed from physical evils and from the moral evil which poisons and desolates it. This practical dualism was no dream, but sober earnest. Even long slumber is a demon to be spurned.⁶

"The cock lifts up his voice with every splendid dawn, and cries: 'Arise, ye men! praise the Best! destroy the Daeva that would put back the world into sleep! Long sleeping becomes you not. Turn not away from the three best things,—right thoughts, right words, right works; turn from the opposite of these!' 'Arise, 'tis day,' says one to his bedfellow; 'who rises first, comes first to paradise. . . . Bring fire, and be blest with herds and offspring.'"⁷

¹ *Brundageherk*, xxvii.

² *Vendidad*, ii.

³ *Ibid.*, xxi.

⁴ *Vendidad*, xi. 26-36.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁷ *Vendidad*, xviii. 36-60.



There shall be no asceticism; no self-torture; no self-contempt; no excessive fasting nor violent grief; nothing that can enervate the soul and body by whose toil the world shall be redeemed with the righteousness of man.

"'Tis an offence to the earth when the mourners for good people go about covered with dirt and loudly lamenting." "He who does not eat, has no strength to live according to right order, nor to work."¹ "To be helpless and enervated is the nature of a Druj (evil demon)."²

Here was a religion that could make heroes, but never a monk. It poured out imprecations on all that caused sickness or death. It erected its altars to medicine, and made healing the noblest art.³ Thritha, the hero, is honored as the first physician, — as in the Vedas also, where he is, as might be supposed from the difference of the races, a saint, — and the Yazata Airyama is invoked to smite sickness and death.⁴ "We praise thee, O Earth, our dwelling-place; and thee, the lord thereof, Ahuramazda! and may there be in my dwelling, summer and winter, whatever brings health and long life to cattle, to men, and the children of the pure."⁵ It allowed no deed to be put off till the morrow which could be done to-day. It is wholly in the spirit of the earlier faith that the later Bundeshesh says, "Remember, in the resurrection the lost ones will say to you, 'Why did you not teach me to do right, that so I might have been saved?'"

The household and the clan (town) must be purified by the same holy war.

¹ *Vendidad*, iii. 36, 37; 112-114. Harlez's note on this seems unreasonable.

² *Vendidad*, xviii. 72.

³ The art of healing is made the subject of curious provisions. The surgeon shall make trial of his skill on the Daeva-worshipper first; and if he fails three times on the true worshipper, he shall not try again. His prices are fixed by law for men and beasts. Of the three kinds of physicians, users of knives, herbs, and holy spells, they who use the last, the sacred formulas, are the best. *Vendidad*, vii. 94-120.

⁴ *Vendidad*, xx. 11; xxii.

⁵ *Yagna*, xvii. 53-55.



"May obstinacy be destroyed by obedience in this dwelling, discord by peace, avarice by generosity, vanity by wisdom, lies by truthfulness, that the Immortals may long bless it with good maintenance and friendly help! Never be the splendor extinguished of prosperity or progeny, that we may shine with purity, and see thee, O Ahura, attaining unto thee ('without end,' — *Harlez*). "May there be given to this clan purity, dominion, profit, majesty, splendor!"¹

Profoundest of all antagonisms was that of Life and Death; and in that centred the meaning of work. By his whole nature the Iranian was a reformer of the actual world, by creating whatever belonged to life, and destroying whatever belonged to death. Life was the fire he worshipped; living growth his ideal good. No sin more deadly than suicide.² Never should die the flame of his enthusiasm for consuming all morbid and fatal things, for turning the dead clod into living organism, for sweeping the lines of cultivation farther and farther through drifting sands and wide salt plains and snowy wastes, — like quickening Mithra, life-giving Haoma, and Ormuzd, source of fire. Death he put far from him, his absolute negation: no contact with its decay. Let the corpse be carried out, away from living earth, from living streams, from the abodes of the living, and committed to the open Dakhma, and the solvent of the desert air; let him that has touched it be impure, and the demon be expelled from member to member till she leaves his body as a fly.³ For letting it remain, even though but a dog's, in the ground two years, there is no atonement forever.⁴ Not for fifty years does the earth become pure again. Not till dust be turned to dust, does the very Dakhma bear to be approached by the pure.⁵

Death is the chief weapon of Ahriman. In the spirit of the whole faith, the later myth tells us that he begins by slaying the primeval creatures of Ahura, the man Gayômarô

¹ *Yacna*, lix.

² Haug: *Essays*, etc., 313.

³ *Vendidad*, viii.

⁴ *Vendidad*, iii. 135.

⁵ *Vendidad*, vii. 125, 127.



and the Bull, who have lived in heavenly bliss six thousand years,—a celestial union.¹ Thus is opened the long world-tragedy, by an act typical of the whole. But the seed of Gayômarð was purified by the sun, and the whole race of man was born from it, to wage war against the murderer till he should be utterly subdued.² Of a divine necessity, life overswept death just as good conquered evil; for both were one conception. "The soul of the righteous desires immortality and the strength that overwhelms the wicked,"³ or "attains to immortality, but that of the wicked has everlasting punishment."⁴ According to his choice in this life, the other holds him to the master to whom he belongs; he goes to the "house of hymns" (*Garð-demâna*) or the "house of destruction" (*Drûjô-demâna*), across the "bridge (*Chinvat*) of the judge" or "gatherer," where the questioning of his conscience concerning his life determines whether there be width enough for him to pass, and the angels or the demons take their own.⁵ The wicked spirits tremble when they breathe the perfume of the spirit of the pure. "Vohu-manô rises from his golden throne in paradise, and asks, How, O pure One, hast thou come hither, from the mortal to the immortal life?"

"Joyously go the pure souls to the golden throne of Ahura and his immortal ones."⁶ "For he who knows purity, knows Ahura; to such he is father, brother, friend."⁷ "Teach me to know thy laws, O Ahura, that I may walk by the help of thy pure spirit, beholding and communing with thee."⁸ Through one's own soul he is justified or condemned. A fragment from one of the latest writings of the faith (*Mînoḵhired*), but fully in the spirit of the earlier ones, describes the soul of the pure after death as met on its way by a sweet wind from the mid-day, in

¹ *Bundehesh*, xv.

² *Yagna*, xlv. 7; Harlez; Spiegel.

³ *Vendidad*, xix. 95, 96, 107.

⁴ *Yagna*, xlv.; Haug, xlv.

⁵ *Bundehesh*, xv.

⁶ *Yagna*, xlv. 7; Haug.

⁷ *Vendidad*, xix. 103; 103, 104.

⁸ *Yagna*, xxxiii., xxxiv.



which comes the law of his own character, as a beautiful and stately maiden, who declares to him his own good words, thoughts, and deeds, and their heavenly rewards, and leads him to the divine ford, bestowed at Ahura's own command; and the soul of the wicked, met in like manner by his own law, as an evil odor, which brings him to the great darkness without beginning, and the poison from Ahriman's hands.¹ How Christian dogma is here anticipated!

It is noticeable also that the parallel with Christian Dualism is carried out in the creation of an evil humanity by Ahriman, in opposition to the good;² only the curse is not a doom of depravity on the whole race, but the creation of wicked portions outside of the law. The war of elements in the old storm-cloud must transfuse the life of mankind and of the race. This appears in epos and history as the strife of Iran with Turan. Such the unceasing warfare for possession of the soul of man.

Immortality, in the Avesta, is not involved in transmigration like that of Brahmanism, nor in *nirvāṇa*, the Buddhist's refuge from transmigration; it does not tend to absorption in Ahura; it does not mingle man with the brute, nor merge him with the god. It is distinctly and completely personal; the beginning of that relation to the future which has given Christianity its hold upon the Aryan world. All the tragedy, all the poetry, which has gathered around the conception of the individual as a boundless possibility of good or evil, not in this life only, but for everlasting existence, has its germ in the religion of Iran. The Jews did not come out of their gloomy and shadowy

¹ See Spiegel's *Khordak-Avesta*, xxxvii. The *Bandeshk* says that at the judgment "every one will see his own works, good or evil, as clear as white from black; each receives the reward of his doings: the good weep for the bad, and the bad for themselves." (Chap. xxi.) Justi.

² Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 287. But the later mythology derives all races, in all the seven quarters of the world, as well as all the strange amorphous kinds of men with which imagination had peopled the wastes of Central Asia, from the seed of Gayōmard.



Sheol till Persia had taught them in the exile this idea of the permanence of individual being; nor did Christianity add anything to the positiveness of this older faith in a future existence.

Man's infinite worth divides the universe and draws all living powers to the one or the other side. On him, their central sum and purpose, the poles of creation turn. And it is no mere strife of flesh and blood, but one of spirit against spirit waged in the world of moral volition. Here is a race that converts its sensualities into ideas that it may master them in their essence. It is will and it is purpose that infects or purifies the elements; and nothing shall move man's desire or dread in them but their reflex of his own spiritual attractions to the light or to the dark. He surrounded himself with legions of intensely active wills, rank over rank, sphere beyond sphere, penetrating and animating Nature, giving significance to its forces and forms; not moving in the play of harmony before the outward eye, like the gods of the æsthetic Greek; not in mystical illusion, like the passive Hindu's, — but arrayed against each other, like the warring hosts of Milton's Christian epic (which is but a modern Avesta), the rent republic of the spiritual universe in arms. The Platonic τὸ δαιμόνιον, the immeasurable ideal space through which the perfection of deity gradually descended into union with the human, was here brimming and seething with the deadly conflict of opposing wills. The Iranian Satan was no poor monster with nostrils fire-breathing, with horns and hoofs of beast; no Lucifer fallen from heaven to play the rebel against God, on a throne of desperation and under omnipotent thunderbolts of doom, — but an invisible Presence, armed with personal power equal to his hate of good, infecting alike the outward and the inward worlds. The righteous purpose only could resist and overcome him; and its weapons were threefold.



1. The spirit of Ahura: —

“O Father over the herds and over the just through his love of justice, over the pure creation through its purity: Thou manifest giver of good, whose greatness, goodness, and beauty we desire (to augment!)! May he protect us, direct us, by [our] purity, activity, liberality, and tenderness, with the fire of Ahura.”² “Inquire of me, with a right spirit, — of me, the Creator, who is ready to answer; so shall it be well with thee, and thou shalt attain to purity if thou seekest me.”³

2. The word or law of Ahura (*Māthra-çpeñta*): meaning, first, the revelation through Zoroaster, probably the five Gāthās; then the three sacred formulas, especially Ahuna-vairya embodying the praise of obedience and purity; and succor to the poor, as the kingdom of God,⁴ which “was before the heavens or the earth, the righteous or the unrighteous powers,” — and of which the recitation should, like the Hindu Gāyatrī, bring salvation; but the taking away of any part of it, in utterance, banishment as far from heaven as the world is wide;⁵ and as the priestly ritualism increased, the efficacy of words to save became extended to a host of formulas for invocation and service, until the Persian Bible, in common with all Bibles, became a missal of superstition; and last, came the sacred authority of spoken truth to punish and destroy lies. A word is the first of sanctions which are called *mithras*; and of a word in this sense Mithra is the guardian and avenger. “Break not a promise (*mithra*), neither with a just man, nor an unbeliever,” — for it is for the good and the bad alike. He who lies to Mithra destroys the whole land;

¹ Harlez.

² *Yagna*, lvii. 10-12; Spiegel.

³ *Vendidad*, xviii. 18-20. All the powers, symbolical and spiritual, consecrated by the traditional faith as belonging to Ahura, were instrumental in his aid. Thus the *Yashis* say (xiii. 77) that Ahriman is driven back by *Ātar* and *Vohu-manō*, or fire and good thought: as in the Vedas by Indra and Prayer; that *Asha-vahista* fire keeps guard over him in hell; that the multitudinous Ferouters watch the wall which Ahura has built around the holy mountain.

⁴ Spiegel; *Khordeh-Avesta*, Bd. iii. 3.

⁵ *Yagna*, xix. 12-15.



slays as many as a hundred evil doers.¹ "For Mithra cannot be deceived. Those who deal not false with him, he brings out of all their trouble; from the arms of liars he takes away might, from their feet strength, from their eyes sight, from their ears hearing. Mithra, who watches with ten thousand eyes, all-knowing, may not be deceived."² Haug has well said that "the angel *Rashnu-razishita*, the rightest righteousness," whom the Yasht in his praise describes as present in all beings, places, and forms, represents the eternal laws of Nature and morality, like the Themis of the Greeks.³

3. Work: the sacred efficacy of labor; the praying, with the hands fulfilling the prayer, — as real three thousand years ago as to us to-day. The sweat of the brow was no curse to these builders of their heaven out of the conditions of the earth; no bitter fruit of a Fall, as with the Hebrew. Praise and prayer went with it, — service of God, redemption of man. Yima widened out the world, filled his paradise with cattle, beasts of burden, busy, happy men; and the Earth answered his prayer and the stroke of his spear, or plough, with her increase; and at command of Ahura, he drove his herds to milder climes, and bore the seeds of plants, and with work of hands and heel made a golden land, where harvests did not fail, where was no wrangling, no beggary, nor falsehood, poverty, nor sickness, nor ravenous creature of Ahriman, — all before his bitter fall.⁴ So Egypt ascribed the plough to Osiris, the Greeks to Ceres, the Chinese to mythic kings; the Vedic Hindus to the Aṅvins, "sons of the sky;" the Scythians thought it fell from heaven.⁵ It was said that Hesiod, in his sentence, "the idle are enemies of the gods," set a new law in place of the law of Oriental society. But Iran disproves the assertion. To

¹ *Mihr-Yasht*, 1.

² *Mihr-Yasht*, 6.

³ *Essays*, etc., 205.

⁴ *Vendidad*, ii.

⁵ *Herod.* iv. 5.



the Mazdean belongs the honor of having clearly and practically conceived, through the moral and religious earnestness of his grasp on the stern conditions of life, that *divine* work depends on human,¹—not only on man's hand-work, but the praise and prayer which, while fulfilling the law, assures its growth. "Grow, O Haoma, through my word."²

The whole of this spiritual armor against evil is summed up in one sentence, the ever-recurring formula,—"Rightness of thought, word, and deed;" often called "purity,"³ and constantly associated with forms and rites of purification, which are minutely detailed for priest and people in the Vendidad chapters, but by the very terms of the formula clearly centring in inward aspiration and moral endeavor. Neither thought, word, nor deed, alone suffices; but their integrity in the will. "Turn not away from the well-considered thought, the well-spoken word, the well-done action."⁴ "Call him the true fire-priest, who the whole night seeks guidance from a righteous understanding, fit for the bridge of judgment, and obtaining the life, righteousness, and perfection of paradise [the best life]." "Inquire, O Just One, of me, who am the Creator most bounteous and wise, and readiest to answer,—inquire, and it shall be well with thee."⁵ For indeed "purity" is no less than Ahuramazda himself, who is always called the "Pure One," and can be found only by the will that is at one with his. A perpetual warfare to redeem to its original goodness as his creation what his moral and physical opposite had poisoned, involved prescribed methods of procedure, based at first, there can be no doubt, on

¹ See Tistrya and Fravardin *Yashts*; Spiegel.

² *Yasna*, x. 11.

³ *Asha*—commonly rendered "purity," which was applied at once to gods and men, and which expressed at first the cosmic order, the religious norm and truth of things—became the vague expression of moral order; and the *Ashavan* man became the good man, who fulfilled the duties of the law, etc. Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 18.

⁴ *Vendidad*, xviii. 15-17; Haug; 41-42, Spiegel.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xviii. 6, 7; Haug; 15-20, Spiegel.



obvious relations to the object in view; and even as they went on multiplying by mere prescription, they still represented at least the spirit and purpose of the Being through them adored and served. They were very much concerned in protecting against the contact of dead bodies. As the fire of life was the very body of virtue, so death was abhorred and accursed as the symbol of evil. Diseases, and all apparently abnormal physical conditions, or those which were accompanied with startling or mysterious phenomena, were also sources of impurity. It would be unprofitable to trace the various kinds or grounds of purification, which were multiplied by the immediate relation of religion to the bodily condition of the physical world. But all purification has value only as it helps to purity in thought, word, and deed. The very formula betrays the essence of virtue to have been truth, earnestness, the hate of lies, the love of the real. And this, which marks the whole history of Iranian belief, from the oldest Gâthâs to the latest Achæmenian inscription, is the natural expression of that peculiar sense of dignity and worth in the *person* which enters the historic field with Iranian *Will*.

The Avesta has no theory of the origin of evil other than as a fact involved in that freedom of choice which belongs to personality. Ahriman *chooses* falsehood before truth. It is only in the latest Pârsî books that he is represented as the result of doubts in the Supreme Mind, — a notion which shows the persistence of the same theory. Yima's fall from paradise is due to his fall from truth, under temptation of Ahriman. Mashya and Mashyâna, the first man and woman, — according to the same later mythology, mixed with Chaldean and Semitic traditions, — at first seeing the truth, and aspiring to do like the Yazatas, soon freely yield to the temptation of the Pârsî Satân to believe the lie that he was the creator. They fall into delusions about eating and drinking, which deprave



their bodies; are driven to searching out inventions for their support; lose their love, and dwell apart, and then sacrifice to Daevas.¹ Seven couples proceeding from them give birth to different nations, while this Pârsi Adam and Eve become "like unto demons, and their souls will be in hell" till the resurrection.² Their descendants go back, reversing their track, to the pure life which needs no food; and when Sosyosh, the redeemer, comes, all is restored by the ordeal of fire.³ This very artificial story is made up of foreign elements, and has obviously no philosophical value. It is significant only as showing the persistence of the old Iranian instinct to trace all human experience to the free personality of man.

Here, then, is the earliest affirmation of human liberty as the substance of a religion, — the first genuine escape of man from the dominion of Fate, and introduction to the law, life, and progress of individual and personal energy.

In this way the Iranian solved the problem of evil, stern and inevitable then as now; pointing out and entering the path of solution which all religions that succeeded him have followed. He did not ignore evil; tried neither to think it away by abstraction, nor to hide it under a heap of interests and pursuits. He bravely met it in his own will and in the world; pursued it through soul and sense, to the very bounds of his thought, battling it down with Ahuramazda's purity of thought and life, and Yima's dagger of work.

Is it correct to define the Avesta-religion as Dualism? That is, does it consciously affirm two equal forces, coeval in being, and eternally at war? The language certainly implies this, since the Good and the Evil principles are even called "primeval twins"⁴ in the oldest Gâthâs.

¹ *Bundehesh*, chap. xv.; Justi.

² *Bundehesh*, chap. xxxi.; Justi.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Yâçna*, xxx. 3.



ascribed to Zoroaster himself. Nothing could be more strongly stated than the intrinsic antagonism of these powers.¹ It is difficult to understand how Haug can reconcile with the whole tenor of these writings his theory that the older portions at least are purely monotheistic, in the sense that the two "minds," good and evil, are both included in the conception of Ahuramazda; and still further, that the one represents the real, and the other the unreal,²—mere "destruction or lie" (*Druj*),—these two being "united in the one God" as his "two spirits."³ The passages which Haug translates in accordance with this theory are differently rendered by Harlez, Spiegel, and Bleeck, who also agree with each other.⁴ Zoroaster's theology, in Haug's view, recognizes one Creator of light and darkness, good and evil, like the Hebrew Jahveh;⁵ and is to be distinguished from his philosophy of evil, which was dualistic. The distinction is a rational one, though in the absence of certainty whether the specific Gâthâs on which it is based are rightly ascribed to Zoroaster, and in view of the disagreement of translators, it is doubtful if we are yet justified in making it. As to Jehovah, there is a distinction to be made. Hebrew and Iranian conceptions differ in respect of the focal distance of deity, as seen by man, — a distance so great in the one case (Hebrew), that the act of creating evil could not be supposed to involve anything analogous to human responsibility, especially responsibility to human reason or conscience, on a positively unlimited will, which might at its pleasure have transformed evil into good, or right into wrong; a distance in the other case (Iranian) so imperceptible, that to ascribe evil to God would be, first, to make Him directly responsible for that which it was His

¹ See, especially, *Vendidad*.

² *Yagna*, xix. 9.

³ *Essays*, etc., p. 303.

⁴ *Yagna*, xix. 9; xlv. 2; Haug.

⁵ II. Samuel xii. 11; Isaiah xlv. 7; Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 302.



very life to break down and destroy, as His essential opposite and innate foe; and next, to contradict that present character by which alone He was known to man. For the Hebrew, good and evil, moral and physical, could more readily be ascribed to one creative source, because creation was, if not exactly production out of nothing, yet approaching to it, since the thing created was somehow external to the Creator; but for the Iranian, to whom creation was simply a spiritual self-affirmation, distinctly significant of its maker,¹ good and evil were expressions of positively antagonistic wills, and could hardly as such be thrown back upon one and the same person. The attempt to do so was made in later, probably Sassanian, times (fifth century of Christianity), under Semitic influence, doubtless Babylonian,² and is still adhered to by the Pársis. Schemes prevailed deriving the world from Time, Fate, Light, Space. Both Ormuzd and Ahriman were made to spring from Zrvan-akarana, "Boundless Time," — a substance sufficiently vague to be but semi-personal, if not impersonal, — in hopes to reconcile the older Dualism with a distincter demand for unity in the religious conception. A partial basis for this idea was, according to Haug, in the mistranslation of a passage in which it is said that the weapons to smite Ahriman were "made *in* boundless time."³ But the history of the doctrine points to a deeper meaning. And although Haug considers Dualism to have been merely the philosophy, and monotheism the theology, of the older Avesta, he cannot but think that a philosophy which reconciles itself with monotheism by making a good

¹ "The idea of creation is expressed in the Avesta by the root *dā*, to institute, *posere*." Darmesteter: *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, p. 23.

² See Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, English edition, p. 230. So Spiegel: *Studien über das Zendvesta* (*Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Gesellsch.*, v. 227). Rapp (in the same, xix. 83). Rawlinson, who identifies Zrvan-akarana with Bel Ziru-banit of the Assyrian inscription (*Jour. Royal Asiatic Soc.* xv. p. 245, note 2). Pictet: *Les Origines Indo-Européennes*, ii. 717. Carré: *L'Ancien Orient*, ii. p. 375.

³ Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 24.



spirit create a bad one, in such way that the latter becomes a "twin spirit" with itself, is a speculation on the question of origin, which we should hardly expect to find in the early stages of a religion, or even in a monotheistic reformer at such a stage. It is only an advanced and refined monotheism that would abstract the positive quality of evil, especially moral evil, so completely as to subsume it under the plans and methods of a perfect being, — for example, upon ontological grounds, such as the necessity of imperfection in all finite processes. Hebrew monotheism was by no means consistent. Yet the Hebrews never ascribed human passions and vices to Jahveh, except so far as they could justify these to themselves by their nature or effects.¹

For myself, I do not think Zoroastrianism shows any signs whatever of a philosophy of evil, any more than Judaism. It is a moral and spiritual protest against evil; and it uses the phraseology of a twofold creation simply to concentrate and antagonize the two sides of actual experience, behind which it goes not.

I agree with Haug so far as this, that I do not find pure Dualism in the *religion* of the Avesta; but still less do I find one good God dividing himself through creation into twin antagonistic principles. The Avesta affirms Ahura as superior, and Ahriman as inferior.

1. There can be little doubt that Ahura is the Iranian representative, even genealogically, of the old Aryan Varuna,² supreme Lord (*Asura*), and omniscient (*viçva-vedas*) ordainer of the laws of the universe and of the moral order, whose eyes behold every deed of man, and whose bonds (or nooses) are the inevitable penalties of

¹ In the earlier of the Jehovah passages referred to, the word "evil" is not used positively, but with reference to its quality as penalty inflicted by Jehovah, and therefore as good; and even in the later, as the antithesis to "peace," it signifies trouble, which is here referred to God; thus changing it into blessing.

² In Indo-European period, as Varuna (Gr. Ouranos). See the author's *India*, chapter on "The Hymns."



his sin.¹ The same qualities and symbols belong to both; they are both associated with Mithra (the sun); both are gods of fire, parents of the *Atharvan*, or personified sacrificial flame; both "masters of all the gods." Each is chief of a band of seven immortal powers, — the one *Âdityas*, the other *Amesha-çpeñtas*. Varuna was the far depth of space, the rounding heaven, the limits of thought and power; and thus, and thus only, naturally associated with the mystery of night, as well as with the orderly movement of the heavenly bodies, which night in fact revealed. Now it was easy for the Iranians to make this grandest of the old Asuras their supreme Ahura; but it was scarcely possible that they should have made him the source of Ahriman, since it was precisely this absoluteness of his moral being that determined them to choose him from among all the old deities as their supreme God. He is the unity of truth and light; he is light because truth. And this is precisely the significance of Ahura. The very essence of Ahriman, on the contrary, is the unity of falsehood and darkness; he is the one because the other. It is true that Varuna was also associated with the darkness of night; true also that there were aspects in his laws of penalty which fear might have turned into signs of hate: the "nooses of Varuna" were doubtless the terror of the wicked. His anger is indeed often spoken of.² "As the night sun," says a commentator, "he is even regarded as the god of evil."³ But evil from Varuna could only have been the penal sufferings of the sinner, — the sign, not of moral evil in the god himself, but of righteousness. He is even called merciful to the sinner, and supplicated as providential care.⁴ There is nothing to hint of Ahrimanic quality in Varuna's bonds of moral order, more than in his grand paths in the nightly sky.

¹ *Rig-Veda*, viii. 42, 1; ii. 27, 10; vii. 86. See also Darmesteter: *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 42.

² See "Hymns to Varuna," in Langlès' *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 336. *Rig-Veda*, vii. 86.

³ Langlès' *Bib. Orient.*, p. 126.

⁴ *Rig-Veda*, vii. 86.



2. I observe that evil is everywhere conceived as inferior and secondary; and so far from being commanded to worship it as he does good, the believer is to hate, spurn, and destroy it. If it were a part of Ahura's own being, that could not be. There is no such mysticism in Zoroaster as to inculcate the service of one spirit of God by destroying another spirit of God. Religion is ever the service of the ideal. But it is idle to imagine that which a man hates and fights through what he holds higher and nobler than it, to be his ideal,—in other words, to be his God. He may worship many gods, and some in fear of their power, as the Vedic Aryans did; but when he has gathered up the forces of the universe into two principles,—the one in accordance with his sense of duty and right, and his idea of constructive good; and the other utterly and absolutely in opposition thereto,—and believes himself called to the extirpation of the one and the exaltation and triumph of the other, it is not easy to see how he can be said to believe the two to be equal principles, or to worship the one as well as the other, or the one as a modification or expression of the other. That only which he holds highest and best, to which he gives his service, is his God.

Now the Avesta is wholly in accordance with this rule. Ahura is the first to create. Ahriman creates, not independently, but only in opposition to Ahura; or, if Haug's translation be correct, creates "non-reality" only.¹ Ahura makes good things, with calm, full consciousness of their inherent goodness and of their good issue. Ahriman makes evil things, under a delusion about their value, and learns their evil destiny only when it comes upon them. He is powerless when strongly opposed. His essential weakness, disappointment, and despair get the better of him on all momentous occasions,—as, for instance, the birth of Zoroaster,² when he flies with all his hosts to bury

¹ *Yaçna*, xxx. 3, 4.

² *Vendidad*, xix. 147.



himself in hell. He cannot prevent the good genii from striking him and driving away his powers.¹ Even in the later writings, — in which the two powers are so equalized that the one is throned in eternal light, the other in primeval darkness, — Ahura, by superior knowledge, cheats Ahriman into a truce for nine thousand years before their war should begin, thereby securing to himself the victory, anticipating him by creating the world of matter and man between their two realms, as a bulwark, and then, repeating the formula, *Ahuna-vairya*, so terrifies him at the discovery of what he has conceded that he hides himself for three thousand years.² Down to the tenth century, and the heresy of Anselm of Canterbury, the Christian doctrine of the Atonement affirmed a similar stretch of cunning practised by Christ upon the Devil to deprive him of his legitimate rights to the soul of man. Everything in the Avesta points to nonentity as the end to which Zoroastrianism would pursue its evil principle.³ Some later Persian sects conceive of its relation to the good simply as that of the shadow to the light.⁴ Cudworth⁵ quotes Plutarch and Theopompus to prove that Ahriman was inferior and transient; and affirms that the "Ditheists" (Magi) started with "a firm persuasion of the essential goodness of the Deity," but to explain the evil in the world had "to suppose another animalish principle,⁶ self-existent, or an evil god." Ahura loves the good, and so creates it. But Ahriman exists only by negation, and only creates evil because he hates the good, and wishes

¹ Spiegel: *Erânische Alterthumskunde*, ii. p. 123. Taimurath binds and rides him in form of a horse (*Yasht*, xv. 12: xix. 29). He is powerless when sacrifice is made to the air (*Yasht*, xv. 56). Zoroaster "reaches him against his will" (*Yasht*, xvii. 19).

² *Bundehesh*, chap. i.; Justi. See also Spiegel: *Avesta*, iii. l. lii.

³ *Bundehesh*, chap. i.

⁴ Hyde: *Veterum Persarum . . . Religionis Historia*, cap. xxii.

⁵ *Intellectual System*, i. 354, 379.

⁶ Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*, xlv.) distinguishes Zoroaster from those who "make two rival gods," as "calling the father God, the other Daemon." So Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, xiii. 4.



to kill it; and this, says the Bundeshesh, is his eternal darkness.¹ He is the god of negation. This anticipation of the highest sense of civilization, which sees in moral evil, as Goethe presents it in Mephistopheles, "the spirit that denies," and in physical evil the dark force that waits to be mastered by the light, shows how profoundly rooted in human intuition is the reality of moral order, and the unity of the moral and physical universe. Evil, then, is here not God; it is the Adversary. It is not original, but secondary. It follows up good with its opposite, and that in the minutest details, but in a merely mechanical and imitative way; not as representing the essential possibility of misuse and disproportion in every power of good, but putting out something else as its external antagonist over against it. Its logic is futile and helpless, so far as it has any, and amounts to mere contradiction, which is not only not discussion, but the most contemptible form of resistance; and though succeeding so far as to seduce men to their destruction, is doomed to essential failure, having no root in the original purpose of things. Though without known beginning, it must have an end.

The Avesta has, I repeat, no philosophy of evil. Ahri-man is regarded as a mere purpose of destruction, without even so much as the ulterior end of pleasure in destroying others; at least we find no emphasis laid on such motive, so little reflective reason is there in this religion of pure personal will. How evil originated, how it is related to the universal good, how it could have power to resist this, do not enter into the question. The moral conflict has become all-absorbing, and speculative problems are barred out, or postponed for the tremendous realities of the conscience; everything centres in the divided will, and all that can be done is to expand the experience to cosmical proportions, as a conflict of opposing wills.

¹ Chap. i.



And these forces are dealt with simply as actual beings, not as data for theogony or philosophy. But it is no more possible that the two should have been regarded as equal gods, than that the evil mind in the worshipper should have seemed to him to have equal rights with the good. There was but one Supreme God; and the simple point for us to consider as between them, is, which did this religion honor and trust most, which does the law-book pronounce fittest to be trusted, mightiest for good, worthiest to be loved and pursued? The answer is: it nowhere concedes to Ahriman one attribute of deity, and nowhere refuses one to Ahura. Take for instance creative power: —

“I ask of Thee, tell me the right, O Ahura! How arose the best (present) life? The beneficent spirit, O righteous Mazda, is the guardian to ward off every evil from man: the friend for all life (worlds¹).

“I ask of Thee, etc. Who was the father and creator of righteousness in the beginning? Who established the sun and the stars in their way? Who causes the moon to wax and wane? These, with what is known else, I desire to know.

“I ask of Thee, etc. Who upholds the earth and the skies that they fall not? Who made the waters and the trees? Who is in the winds and storms that they so swiftly run? Who, O Mazda, has created the good (spiritual²) minded beings?

“I ask of Thee, etc. Who created, perfect, the light and the dark? Who the sleep and the activity [watching]? Who, morning, noon, and night, and the laws which tell the priest his duties?

“I ask of Thee, etc. Who has created the Bactrian home (devised wisdom³) with its properties (the kingdom⁴)? Who fashioned, by weaving motion, the excellent son out of the father? (Who has rendered the son dear to the father?⁵) (Created the love of the father to the son?⁶) To know these things, I approach thee, O Mazda, bounteous giver of all good, creating all beings!⁷

“Ahura: who created us, who formed us, who keeps us.⁸

¹ Harlez.

² Ibid.

³ Spiegel.

⁴ Ibid. »

⁵ Harlez.

⁶ Spiegel.

⁷ *Yacna*, xliv. ; Haug, xliii. ; Spiegel and Harlez.

⁸ *Yacna*, l. 4.



"Ahura : for whose kingdom, power, and mighty works, we praise him above all beings worthy to be adored, who dwell with our herds to protect them. The Fravashis of the pure, we praise ; the best purity, fairest, immortal, glorious, containing all that is good ; the good spirit, the good kingdom, the good law, and the pure wisdom."¹

"The clouds and mountains ;² all which the eye beholds through the good mind ; sun, stars, and morn which ushers in the day,—all move to thy praise, O righteous Ahura ! And I with my mouth will sing thy praise, in truth, as long as I have breath. Let the creator aid with good mind all that increaseth right conduct, by his will."³

Zarathustra asked Ahuramazda : "Most munificent spirit, which was the word that thou spakest to me, which was before the heavens, before the water or earth, or animals, or trees, or fire, or before the righteous, before the demons and savage men (Daevas and impious men⁴), before the whole material world?"⁵

Then for absolute and pure trust, take the first of the Gâthâs : for the all-embracing names of Ahuramazda, the Ormazd-Yasht. Ahriman has no honor but the fear and hate his purpose inspires. And though the earlier books have left the issue of this great war to be inferred from this spirit of zeal and victory which animates them, yet the later writings have worked out the triumph of the good principle in a very positive eschatology. The Gâthâs hint this ; they give Ahuramazda the place of law-giver and final judge over all men. "Creator of blessing for the evil as well as the good, they only who, taught by his spirit, increase the purity of men, will come to thy kingdom,"⁶ or "shall be taught thy law."⁷ "Rewarding words and deeds, thou appointest evil to the wicked and blessing to the good, through thy holiness, at the last end of the creation."⁸ The Yashts, of later origin, describe the effect of the coming of a prophet (*Çaoshyant*) at the last day, "to

¹ *Yasna*, xxxvii. ; Spiegel and Harlez.

² *Yasna*, xlix. ; Harlez.

³ *Ibid.*, Haug.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Harlez.

² Luminaries ; Haug.

⁴ *Yasna*, xix. ; Harlez.

⁶ *Ibid.*, xlii. 4. 6 ; Spiegel.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5 ; Harlez.



make life everlasting, incorruptible, full of vigor, when the dead shall rise again, and imperishable righteousness fill the world; when the evil one (or ones) will disappear, and his whole seed perish."¹ Similar testimony to this victory of Ahura, the destruction of Ahriman, and the resurrection of the dead to immortality, is given by Plutarch² and by Theopompus³ (fourth century B.C.). To this end of the struggle of three thousand years many prophets bring their aid, from Zoroaster to Sosyosh, all of whom have clear foreknowledge of the predestined triumph of good. According to the *Bundehesh*, latest of all, fifteen of these male saints and heroes, and as many female, will return at this glorious day and share its wondrous regenerative work. The purification by fire shall burn away all the dross of evil, even in Ahriman and the Serpent; hell shall fall to dust and disappear, and its place be filled with purity and bliss. The symbolic Bull and the mystic Haoma of the old faith will also reappear as the consummation of all sacrifice, bringing immortal life and becoming immortal food for all, and Ahura dispense to men imperishable garments and eternal bliss.⁴

In all this the doctrine of bodily resurrection is of course implied, and it seems quite superfluous to inquire after evidences of its antiquity. The personality consisted of soul and body, and their union was implied in all personal existence. So Jewish Rabbis taught: it is impossible for the dead to "rise" out of graves except in bodies. In the oldest Gāthās the resurrection idea does not seem to have been worked out, and the simple, immediate spiritual judgment of the Chinvaṭ bridge precludes the sleep in dust which that idea involves after death.⁵ The *Zamyād-Yasht*

¹ *Zamyād-Yasht*, xi, 12.

² *Isis and Osiris*.

³ See Haug: *Essays*, etc., p. 8, 9.

⁴ *Bundehesh*, xxxi.; Justi.

⁵ The beautiful description of the spirit after death, led on the third night across the Bridge and the Holy Mountain to the world of Ahura,—"the pure souls go contented, to the golden thrones of Ahura," etc. (*Vendidad*, xix.),—shows that this belief continued on to a later period.



perhaps intimates a visible immortality on this earth. I cannot but believe that the primitive Zoroastrian, like the Vedic, faith gave the spirits of good men a body of fire, while the wicked were invested with symbolical bodies of darkness and decay. But so closely was soul related to sense, and sense to life, in Iranian conceptions, that these vague notions gradually gave way to that of a purely physical resurrection; and this involved a delay of judgment till the end of the world, when the dispersed atoms could at once be miraculously restored to every personal form.¹ The *Bundehesh* enters into an argument, which is substantially the model of the Christian, to show that even this was possible to the omnipotence of Ahura-mazda,² and declares that each is to rise so unmistakable that men will recognize each other's bodies and souls, and ask with earnest anxiety concerning their conduct since they met in life; the very period of life in which each died shall appear in him; the child's dust rise as youth, the man's as a man; and in the heavenly state, where no more children shall be born, each family shall keep its earthly form intact. It is difficult to believe that this final resurrection doctrine had much practical influence, even if it existed, during the period of the Avestan compositions, when there seems to have been a constant sense of the immediate presence, at least, of the *Fravashis*, or spirits of the pure, as of those who had already passed the Chinvat bridge into their reward.³ In Christianity the same vague inconsistency of sentiment prevails concerning the state of souls after death; on the one hand, they are thought of as conscious, if not present, and as already passed to eternal judgment; and on the other, as awaiting the last trump to rise from the dead at the end of the world. The con-

¹ Rabbins also same.

² *Bundehesh*, xxx. 1. : Justi.

³ *Yagna*, xxiv. 14; xxvi. 34. But in the *Bundehesh*, Ahura creates the *Fravashis* before mankind; chap. ii.



fusion of blind instincts concerning a state as yet unknown of course explains this inconsistency in both religions; but in both the determination of every man's future throughout all time is held to belong to the just and righteous God, and resurrection and judgment alike to prove His triumph over the powers of evil.

A conflict like this could end only in the utter destruction, or the perfect conversion, of the powers of evil. Both these issues are asserted in the Zoroastrian writings, the latter only in the latest. The earlier are too much absorbed in the internecine battle itself to dogmatize as to the way in which the triumph should be used, or to speculate as to the conditions absolutely requisite to the permanent suppression of evil-will. Heaven for the good, hell for the wicked; the corporeal world of Nature and man between these two, and the battle raging for the mastery of every soul,—this was all. Both these spheres are said to be without beginning, and immortality is affirmed of heaven; while hell is nowhere said to be without end.¹ Had evil been regarded as a principle only, or as simply a fact, there would have been room for a philosophy of its origin, function, and end;² but as it was gathered up into a personal will, actuated by personal hate, and antagonized by equal

¹ The only passage in all the older Zend-Avesta which seems to assert eternal punishment is one where it is said of the idolatrous priests that they are so hardened that they ought to avoid the Bridge of Judgment, "to remain forever in the dwelling-place of destruction." (*Yasna*, xlv. 11; Haug.) This can hardly serve to prove the dogma of eternal punishment in the absence of every other proof. Yet Carré so thinks (*L'Ancien Orient*, ii. 326).

² According to the *Bundehesh*, the interpretation of which is extremely uncertain, the good and evil shall at last be raised with their bodies, to pass for three days (after separation according to their characters) through liquid fire of the molten earth, and so be purified; the end whereof, either by the destruction of the very bad, at all events by a sifting process, or rather distilling, by which all evil should be worked off, shall be a pure world, without stain of evil mind. That this can mean that the worst people, those who have been already in *Dûzakh* (hell) for ages, should in three days become perfectly pure, is incredible: the annihilation interpretation is more probable. And it is equally improbable that all should come into the same bliss, since a new and more perfect heaven is said to be created for the good. (See *Bundehesh*, xxxi. ; Justi.) The *Dabistan* gives traditions of Zoroaster from the Mobads, one of which is that he said, "God has commanded me, 'Say thou to mankind that they are not to abide in hell forever; when their sins are expiated, they are delivered out of it.'" — *Dabistan*, i. 363.



hate on the part of another will, the question was simply one of victory, and the interest purely personal and instant. And so it continued after the religion became accepted and instituted, and leisure was afforded for conceiving it as a whole, with all the final consequences it involved.¹

The Avesta asks not, What is the meaning of evil; what ends, spiritual and progressive, it is bound to serve; what its future in human and finite conditions; what its justification as an element of growth? No such questions can enter this purely personal system; but rather, What shall finally be done with these wicked wills, and with this primal wicked will when conquered, to insure their total suppression? Zoroastrianism, then, could not be satisfied with eternal punishments; it would purify the whole universe, — and such a hell would immortalize impurity. Zoroaster would utterly suppress evil, — and such a hell would be an endless demonstration that the evil-will stood fast, even in chains. It was too much in earnest not to wish the terrible strife to end. There were only two ways to end it: either to annihilate the hostile will, or to convert it. The interpreters of the *Bundehesh* are divided on the question, whether Ahriman would be destroyed by the purifying fire of judgment, or brought to sing the praises of Ahura with all his hosts.²

Both these solutions are maintained in the modern Pârsî church; and both seem to have been developed naturally enough out of the genius of the Zoroastrian faith. They certainly were not added to it through contact with the

¹ In the Hindu pantheistic view of evil, it was natural that the early symbols should gradually change their meanings, even passing into opposite ones. They floated in the haze of metamorphosis, where deity became all things in turn, and all things deity. Thus the serpent, originally the cloud-demon, slain by the god of lightning, became in India the coiled bed of the preserving God. But no symbol of evil became in Iran a type of good; the moral emphasis was too strong. So the conflict of the gods unknown to the Veda is a great feature of the eschatology of the Avesta, especially the *Bundehesh*, as also of the *Edda*.

² See *Bundehesh*, chap. xxxi., translated in Schwenck, *Mythologie der Perses*, 324-25.



religions of Media and Babylonia.¹ The old Accadian writings contain no working out of the problem of evil either by annihilation or conversion. The strife was against cōsmical demons out of the abyss, who disturbed the order of the world, and brought disease, calamity, death, and unnatural or insane conduct upon men;² and these were to be repelled by conjuration and spell; but their relation to the moral being was external, and the need was, not of their extirpation, but their defeat. The ethical interest of the Iranian offset his horror of physical death by the heaven prepared beyond it for the good, but the Accadian sent both good and evil to a *sheôl* of "darkness, where there is no food but dust;" and though there were seven (astronomical) zones in this unblest land of shadows, these had no bearing on the final solution of the war of evil against good. To a faith so entirely absorbed in the present life as the Accadian, a resurrection of the dead to judgment, and a consequent purification of the spiritual universe, could have no meaning. The epic of Izdubar contains only one hint looking this way,—a fountain of life in the depths of the world of shades, described as affording power to Ishtar to return from these gloomy realms to the light of day.

Neither in a spiritual nor ethical point of view does the Accadian religion, nor any of its combinations, compare with the Zoroastrian. Good and evil are not distinctly separated, and are often represented by the same deity.³ The Assyrio-Babylonians merely inherited Accadian gods, and the Semitic element brought by Assyria added nothing to the development of these questions. Asshur and Bel and Nebo and Merodach exercised no such function in

¹ The passages in Anquetil's translations from the *Yagna* which teach this doctrine are mistranslated. They are quoted in Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 302.

² See Lenormant: *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. ed., pp. 29, 30.

³ See Schrader: *Höllenf. der Istar*; and *Records of The Past*, vol. i. p. 139; and in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Augsburg, June 19, 1872. Also Lenormant, p. 165-66.



regard to evil as Ahuramazda; represented no moral conflict, nor looked to any final dealing with the woes and sins of the world. Sensual excess, which Ahura put far from him, was in fact involved in the Semitic conception of deity itself; and Baal, Moloch, Jahveh, as gods of fire, were worshipped by rites, even of human sacrifice, which would have been incongruous with the spiritual meaning of that element in the Iranian faith, and made it unfit to serve as a purification of the world from sin. So that neither Accadian nor Semitic beliefs could have suggested a final disposal of evil through purifying fire, which should destroy the wicked seeds or convert their malignant will. On the other hand, this eschatology was a natural development of Zoroastrian beliefs, even as presented in the Gâthâs. And to their historical influence must be ascribed its prominence, not only in the Bundelshesh of the Sassanian epoch, but in Hebrew literature subsequent to the exile; as in the Book of Daniel, the apocalyptic Enoch and Ezra, and in the early Christian belief concerning the future life, the end of the world, and the last judgment.¹ Eternity of punishment belongs to a very different class of ideas, since it is as far as possible from recognizing the final purification of the universe from evil, or the final supremacy of good, although of course intended to do this in some degree. It is therefore thoroughly anti-Iranian, and its promulgation in Christianity and later Judaism must be ascribed to the peculiar intensity of those personal feelings in which the great moral reaction of Christianity originated, and especially to the Messianic apocalyptics of the two centuries preceding the birth of Jesus, — prominently, the Book of Daniel.²

¹ The doctrine of the resurrection of the body was penetrating Palestine in the time of Christ, and that of the immortality of the soul, derived from Platonism, spreading in Alexandria. But these two excluded each other. Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 316.

² See, for Hebrew ideas of hell-punishment, *Sirach*, vii. 17; of immortality in post-exilic period, *Wisdom of Solomon*, ii. 23; Josephus, B. J. ii. 8, 11; of resurrection, *Ecclesiastes*



But the whole tenor of the Avesta implies, — and this is the grand thing about it, — the victory of good over evil, of right over wrong, the sovereignty of the law proclaimed in the conscience. As Ahuramazda was first, so He shall be last. Man, his creation, born radiant, with eyes looking upward, shall soar above his evil stars; and this, not by the destruction of his personal will, but by the natural and noble exercise of it. The Bundeshesh says that "with consciousness and the Fravashi [ideal soul] Ahura brought love and wisdom unto men." "Which will ye choose, O ye souls of men, about to take earthly form, — to be made for warring against evil, that ye may afterwards become immortal, or to be protected against evil from the beginning?" "And by their wisdom they choose to be made as creatures, to strive for immortal life."¹ This worshipper of light could see all things resolving themselves into light at last. In the Gâthâs, his living trust in being on the side of Ahura, the just and pure one, is his all-sufficing confidence, while the fate of the evil is simply to be conquered at last. In the later Yaçnas, Vendidad, Yashts, and the Bundeshesh, there gradually grew up a historic or rather prophetic construction of the process by which the end should be reached. The world-history is divided into four periods of three thousand years each, — during the first two of which Ahura creates freely his good world; during the third the strife begins and deepens; and during the fourth, opening with Zoroaster, three prophets appear at intervals of a thousand years, the last of whom, Sossyosh, brings the resurrection of bodies, judgment of souls, and destruction of evil, — according to the Bundeshesh, by puri-

xvi. 12; xlix. 10; II Maccabees, vii., xli. 44: of last judgment, Rabbins: of resurrection of body, Rabbins. Duschak: *Die biblisch-talmud. Glaubenslehre*, etc., pp. 181, 182. The extreme resemblance of Persian eschatology with that of Daniel is traced in Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 303. Resurrection, with Daniel and Maccabees, is partial only, however. See also Duschak: *Die biblisch-talmud. Glaubenslehre*, etc., p. 175.

¹ *Bundeshesh*, ii.; Justi.



fication of all good and evil, through fire, into capacity for blessedness. For this end the corporeal world is brought into being, that the good principle might, by mastering the intervening space between his own realm and the opposing one, absorb the latter, and make the universe one in himself.¹

Lenormant² thinks it was "from rejecting the notion of original sin, and substituting the doctrine of emanation for that of creation, and fatalism for freedom, that most of the peoples of pagan [Aryan] antiquity were led to the melancholy theory of the Four Ages, as we find it in the sacred books of India and the poems of Hesiod;" whereas the Bible, regarding man as free and not subject to fate, does not contain the idea of world-decadence. But there seems to be as much practical fatalism in the Hebrew conception of a tendency to sin in human nature—capable of causing man first to be expelled from Paradise, then to be almost extirpated by a deluge, and through all ages to be scourged by a divine wrath, from which even the chosen people are not free, and from which only a divine Messiah could deliver him—as in that pantheistic evolutionism of the Aryan, which if resulting in a more definite idea of a cycle of degeneracy, yet involved also the further consequence of a renewal of good beyond the destruction of an evil world. Surely, the God who creates man after His own pleasure is as truly a power of fate as the law that makes his history a decadence, and its end a dissolution of the evil it has caused. In fact the Hebrews, as well as the Hindus and Persians and Greeks, were led to the "melancholy" theory of world-destruction,—certainly not less melancholy because it was to be the consequence

¹ Spiegel: *Erân. Alterth.* ii. 142. The Hebrews did not reach this till very late; and Paul's description of the triumph of Christianity at the last judgment, resolving all evil into obedience to God, is a carrying out of it (1 Cor. xv. 24). The doctrine of final restitution of the world gradually penetrated Jewish beliefs, and the later Cabalistic writings resemble in this the Zoroastrian. Nicolas: *Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs*, p. 306.

² *Contemporary Review* for September, 1879.



of original sin, than if it had been the sequel of gold, silver, brass, and iron periods. In fact, the Hebrews believed in such penal destruction, and transmitted the idea to Christianity, which made it a fundamental motive. As for freedom, no race ever abased itself before a personal God more than the older Hebrews; who believed that their jealous Jahveh punished curiosity by expulsion from Eden, and aspiration to social progress with confusion of tongues. They were more oppressed by that sense of separation from God which came from the emphasis laid on their freedom to sin, than the Aryan was by the sense of an emanation, even by fatality, which did not break the unity of Being. Semite, as well as Aryan, had his myth of a Golden Age and of man's fall from it, thus confessing the power of historic decadence and that element of fate which cannot be ignored. And of these the Aryan has been the prophet of progress: this was the meaning of destiny for him, and his doctrine of lost things; and his evolution is the philosophy of hope. The Persian was the very apostle of earnest ethical endeavor. He also had his myth of "original sin," of a Fall (of Yima, king of Paradise) through a lie; and Lenormant himself finds in the serpent created by Ahriman to poison his Eden and effect his ruin an echo of the same tradition on which the Bible story rests. This writer, even while making use of these resemblances to aggrandize Bible authority, is candid enough to confess that the Zoroastrian scriptures gave moral value to the older Chaldeo-Semitic conceptions of the Fall.¹

Now, we have said that this religion does not deal in the metaphysics of evil; it dwells simply on the practical antagonism of right and wrong, and of the things which make for the one and for the other. It was not introversive enough to find the root of evil, as later systems have, in human nature. It was too much absorbed, as it seems

¹ *Contemporary Review*, September, 1879.