

# ESSAYS

ON

## THE SACRED LANGUAGE, WRITINGS, AND RELIGION OF THE PARSIS.

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*Fourth Edition.*

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TO WHICH IS ALSO ADDED,

*A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF THE LATE DR. HAUG  
BY PROFESSOR E. P. EVANS.*

LONDON :

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. L<sup>TD</sup>

DRYDEN HOUSE, GERRARD STREET, W.

1907

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## IV.

THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION AS TO ITS  
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

IN this Essay it is intended to give a summary view of the origin of the Zoroastrian religion,<sup>1</sup> its general character and development, so far as they can be ascertained from the original Avesta texts. The reader being furnished, in the preceding Essay, with translations of a good many passages referring particularly to this subject, the conclusions to be drawn from them can be here condensed into comparatively

I.—THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BRAHMANICAL  
AND ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIONS.

Before we can properly discuss the question of the origin of the Zoroastrian religion, and the time when its founder flourished, certain traces of an originally close connection (which the attentive reader of both the Vedas and Zend-Avesta will readily perceive to exist) must be pointed out between the Brahmanical and Zoroastrian religions, customs, and observances.

## I.—NAMES OF DIVINE BEINGS.

The most striking feature, in this respect, is the use which we find made, in both the Vedas and Zend-Avesta, of the names, *deva* and *asura* (*ahura* in the Avesta). *Deva*

<sup>1</sup> This subject has been already briefly treated in the author's "Lecture on the origin of the Parsi religion," delivered on the 1st of March 1861, at Poona; and more fully in the Essay appended to his German work on the Gáthas, vol. ii. pp. 231-259.

is in all the Vedas, and in the whole Brahmanical literature, the name of the divine beings, the gods who are the objects of worship on the part of the Hindus to the present day. In the Zend-Avesta, from its earliest to its latest texts, and even in modern Persian literature, *deva* (Pers. *dīv*) is the general name of an evil spirit, a fiend, demon, or devil, who is inimical to all that comes from God and is good. In the confession of faith, as recited by Parsis to this day, the Zoroastrian religion is distinctly said to be *vī-daēvō*, "against the Devas," or opposed to them (see Yasna xii. 1, p. 173), and one of their most sacred books is called *vī-daēvō-dāta* (now corrupted into *Ven-didād*), i. e., what is given against, or for the removal of, the Devas. The Devas are the originators of all that is bad, of every impurity, of death; and are constantly thinking of causing the destruction of the fields and trees, and of the houses of religious men. The spots most liked by them, according to Zoroastrian notions, are those most filled with dirt and filth, especially cemeteries, which places are, therefore, objects of the greatest abomination to a true Hormazd-worshipper.

*Asura* is, in the form *Ahura*, the first part of AHURAMAZDA (Hormazd), the name of God among the Parsis; and the Zoroastrian religion is distinctly called the Ahura religion (see Yasna xii. 9, p. 174), in strict opposition to the Deva religion. But among the Hindus *Asura* has assumed a bad meaning, and is applied to the bitterest enemies of their Devas (gods), with whom the Asuras are constantly waging war, and not always without success, as even Hindu legends acknowledge. This is the case throughout the whole Purāṇic literature, and as far back as the later parts of the Vedas; but in the older parts of the Rigveda Sañhitā we find the word *Asura* used in as good and elevated a sense as in the Zend-Avesta. The chief gods, such as Indra (Rigveda i. 54, 3),<sup>1</sup> Varuṇa (Rv. i. 24, 14), Agni

<sup>1</sup> In the quotations from the Rigveda, the first number refers to the Maṇḍala ("book," of which there are ten), the second to the hymn, and the third to the verse.

(Rv. iv. 2, 5; vii. 2, 3), Savitṛi (Rv. i. 35, 7), Rudra or Shiva (Rv. v. 42, 11), &c., are honoured with the epithet "Asura," which means "living, spiritual," signifying the divine, in its opposition to human nature. In the plural, it is even used, now and then, as a name for all the gods, as for instance in Rv. i. 108, 6: "This Soma is to be distributed as an offering among the Asuras," by which word the Rishi means his own gods whom he was worshipping. We often find one Asura particularly mentioned, who is called "Asura of heaven" (Rv. v. 41, 3; heaven itself is called by this name, Rv. i. 131, 1), "our father, who pours down the waters" (Rv. v. 83, 6); Agni, the fire god, is born out of his womb (Rv. iii. 29, 14); his sons support heaven.

In a bad sense we find Asura only twice in the older parts of the Rigveda (ii. 32, 4; vii. 99, 5), in which passages the defeat of the "sons or men of the Asura" is ordered, or spoken of; but we find the word more frequently in this sense in the last book of the Rigveda, (which is only an appendix to the whole, made in later times), and in the Atharvaveda, where the Rishis are said to have frustrated the tricks of the Asuras (iv. 23, 5), and to have the power of putting them down (vi. 7, 2).

In the Brâhmanas, or sacrificial books, belonging to each of the Vedas, we find the Devas always fighting with the Asuras.<sup>1</sup> The latter are the constant enemies of the Hindu gods, and always make attacks upon the sacrifices offered by devotees. To defeat them all the craft and cunning of the Devas were required; and the means of checking them was generally found in a new sacrificial rite. Thus the Asuras are said to have given rise to a good many sacrificial customs, and in this way they largely

<sup>1</sup> In the Purânas the *Asuras* are fighting not with the *Devas*, but with the *Suras*. The latter word is a mere fiction of later times, and not to be found in the Vedas. A false etymology has called this new class of gods

into existence. The bad sense attached to *Asura* was thought to lie in the negative prefix *a*, and therefore their opponents should appear without it, in the form *Sura*.

contributed towards making the Brahmanical sacrifices so complicated and full of particular rites and ceremonies. To give the reader an idea of the way in which the battles between the Devas and Asuras are said to have been fought, a translation of a passage, taken from the *Aitareya Brâhmana* (i. 23)<sup>1</sup> of the Rigveda, is here given:—

‘The Devas and Asuras waged war in these worlds. ‘The Asuras made these worlds fortified places (*pur*, i.e., ‘*polis*, town), and made them as strong and impregnable ‘as possible; they made the earth of iron, the air of silver, ‘and the sky of gold. Thus they transformed these worlds ‘into fortified places (castles). The Devas said: These ‘Asuras have made these worlds fortified places; let us ‘thus build other worlds in opposition to these (now occu- ‘pied solely by them). They then made out of her (the ‘earth) a seat, out of the air a fire-hearth, and out of the ‘sky two repositories for sacrificial food (these are called ‘*Havirdhâna*). The Devas said: Let us bring the *Upa- ‘sads*;<sup>2</sup> by means of a siege (*upasada*) one may conquer ‘a large town. When they performed the first *Upasad*, ‘then they drove them (the Asuras) out from this world ‘(the earth); when they performed the second, then they ‘drove them out from the air; and when they performed ‘the third, then they drove them out from the sky. Thus

<sup>1</sup> An edition and translation of the whole work (in two volumes) was published by the author in 1863, giving full information regarding the Brahmanical sacrifices, which were previously little known to European Sanskrit scholars, as it is scarcely possible to obtain a knowledge of them without oral information from professional sacrificial priests. But they are too essential a part of the Vedic religion (now chiefly preserved by the so-called *Agnihotris*) to be overlooked by those who are inquiring into the Brahmanical religion and its history.

<sup>2</sup> This is a particular ceremony which is to take place immediately

after the great *Pravargya* ceremony, during which the priests produce for the sacrificer (*yajamâna*) a golden celestial body, with which alone he is permitted by the gods to enter heaven. When in this way the sacrificer is born anew, he is to receive the nourishment appropriate for an infant's body, and this is milk. The chief part of the *Upasad* ceremony is, that one of the priests (the *Adhvaryu*) presents milk to him in a large wooden spoon, which he must drink. Formerly it had to be drunk from the cow which was to be milked by the *Adhvaryu*. But this custom has now fallen into disuse.

‘ they drove them out from these worlds. The Asuras, ‘ thus driven out of these worlds, repaired to the Ritus ‘ (seasons). The Devas said: Let us perform Upasad. ‘ The Upasads being three, they performed each twice ‘ (that makes six in all, corresponding with the six seasons). ‘ Then they drove them (the Asuras) out from the Ritus. ‘ The Asuras repaired now to the months. The Devas ‘ made twelve Upasads, and drove them out from the ‘ months. After having been defeated here also, they re- ‘ paired to the half-months. The Devas performed twenty- ‘ four Upasads and drove the Asuras out of the half- ‘ months. After having been defeated again, the Asuras ‘ repaired to the day and night; the Devas performed the ‘ Upasads and drove them out. Therefore, the first Upasad ‘ ceremony is to be performed in the first part of the day ‘ and the other in the second part of the day. He (the ‘ sacrificer) leaves thus only so much space to the enemy ‘ as exists between the conjunction of day and night (that ‘ is, the time of twilight in the morning and evening).’

That the Asuras of the Brahmanical literature are the supreme beings of the Parsis (Ahuramazda with his arch-angels) is, according to these statements, hardly to be doubted. But there exists, perhaps, a still more convincing proof. Among the metres, used in the Yajurveda, we find seven which are marked by the epithet *âsurî*, such as *Gâyatrî âsurî*, *Ushnih âsurî*, *Pankti âsurî*.<sup>1</sup> These Asura metres, which are foreign to the whole Rigveda, are actually to be found in the Gâtha literature of the Zend-Avesta, which professedly exhibits the doctrines of the Ahura (Asura) religion. The *Gâyatrî âsurî* consists of fifteen syllables, which metre we discover in the Gâtha Ahunavaiti (see p. 144), if we bear in mind that the number of sixteen syllables, of which it generally consists, is often reduced to fifteen (compare, for instance, Yas. xxxi. 6, and the first two lines of xxxi. 4). The *Ushnih âsurî*, consisting of fourteen syllables, is completely extant in the Gâtha

<sup>1</sup> See the “White Yajurveda,” edited by A. Weber, vol. i. p. 1x.

Vohu-khshathra (Yas. li.), each verse of which comprises fourteen syllables. The *Pankti āsurī* consists of eleven syllables, just as many as we found (p. 144) in the Gāthas Ushtavaiti and Spentâ-mainyû. This coincidence can certainly not be merely accidental, but shows clearly, that the old Gātha literature of the Zend-Avesta was well known to the Rishis who compiled the Yajurveda.

Of great importance, for showing the original close relationship between the Brahmanical and Parsi religions, is the fact that several of the Indian gods are actually mentioned by name in the Zend-Avesta, some as demons, others as angels.

*Indra*, the chief god of the Brahmans in the Vedic times, the thunderer, the god of light and god of war, for whom pre-eminently the Rishis, the ancient founders of Brahmanism, squeezed and drank the intoxicating Soma beverage, is expressly mentioned in the list of the Devas or demons which we find in Vend. xix. 43.<sup>1</sup> He is there second only to *Angrô-mainyush* (*Ahriman*), the arch-fiend who is sometimes designated *dævanām daēvō*, "demon of demons" in the Avesta, but "god of the gods" in Sanskrit.

Next to *Indra* stands *Sćurva daēva*, whom we discover in one of *Shiva's* names *Sharva* (see the White Yajurveda, xvi. 28). In *Nāonhaiṭhya daēva* we readily recognise the *Nāsatyas* of the Vedic hymns, which name is there given to the two Ashvins, the Dioskuri of the Indian mythology.

Some names of the Vedic Devas are, however, used in a good sense, and are transformed into Yazatas or angels in the Zend-Avesta. The most noticeable is *Mithra*, the Sanskrit form being *Mitra*. In the Vedic hymns he is generally invoked together with *Varuṇa* (identical with the god *Uranos* of the Greeks), the ruler of heaven and master of the universe;<sup>2</sup> but in the Zend-Avesta he was

<sup>1</sup> This passage is omitted in two of the oldest manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> In later times he was believed to preside over the waters only; but in

the Vedic hymns he occupied a much higher position. The whole universe is subject to his laws.

everywhere separated from his ancient companion. However, there is one hymn in the Rigveda (iii. 59, *mitrô janân yâtagati*) in which Mitra alone (as the sun) is addressed in the following way:—

‘Mitra calls men to their work; Mitra is preserving earth and heaven; Mitra looks upon the nations always without shutting his eyes. To Mitra bring the offering with ghî!

‘O Mitra! that man who troubles himself to keep thy order (rule), O son of eternity (*âditya*)! shall have abundance; he, protected by thee, shall neither be slain nor defeated; no distress befalls him, neither from near, nor from far.’

In comparing these verses with the extracts given above from the Mihir Yasht, one may easily be convinced of the complete identity of the Vedic Mitra and the Persian Mithra.

Another Vedic deity, *Aryaman*, who is generally associated with Mitra and Varuṇa (Rv. i. 136, 2), is at once recognised in the angel *Airyaman* of the Zend-Avesta. *Aryaman* has in both scriptures a double meaning, (a) “a friend, associate” (in the Gâthas it chiefly means “a client”); (b) the name of a deity or spirit who seems particularly to preside over marriages, on which occasions he is invoked both by Brahmans and Parsis (see p. 142). He seems to be either another name of the sun, like Mitra, Savitri, Pûshan, &c., or his constant associate and representative. In the Bhagavad Gîta (x. 29) he is mentioned as the head of the *pitaras*, “manes, or ancestral spirits.”

*Bhaga*, another deity of the Vedas, belonging to the same class as Mitra and *Aryaman* (to the so-called *Adityas*), is to be recognised in the word *bagha* of the Zend-Avesta, which word is, however, not employed there as a name of any particular divine being, but conveys the general sense of “god, destiny”<sup>1</sup> (lit. “portion”).

<sup>1</sup> This word is to be found in the Slavonic languages (Russian, Polish, &c.) in the form *bag* as the common name for “God.” The ancient Slavonic mythology knew a *biel bog* or white god, and a *czerny bog* or black god.

That the Vedic god *Bhaga* (compare the adjective *baghō-bakhta*, "ordained by fate," which is to be found in both the Veda and the Zend-Avesta) was believed to be a deity, presiding over the destiny and fortune of men, may be clearly seen from some passages in the Rigveda, of which Rv. vii. 41, 2, is here quoted: 'Let us invoke the victor in the morning (*i.e.*, the sunlight which has defeated the darkness of night), the strong *Bhaga*, the son of *Aditi* (imperishableness, eternity), who disposes all things (for during the night all seemed to be lost). The poor and the sick, as well as the king, pray to him, full of trust, saying: Give us our portion.'

*Aramati*, a female spirit in the Vedas, meaning: (a) "devotion, obedience" (Rv. vii. 1, 6; 34, 21), (b) "earth" (x. 92, 4, 5), is apparently identical with the archangel *Armaiti*, which name has, as the reader will have learned from the third Essay, exactly the same two meanings in the Zend-Avesta. In the Vedas, however, her name is of rare occurrence, being found in some hymns of the Rigveda only.<sup>1</sup> She is called a virgin who comes with butter offerings in the morning and evening to *Agni* (Rv. vii. 1, 6), a celestial woman (*gnā*, see p. 170) who is brought by *Agni* (Rv. v. 43, 6).

*Narāshansa* (see *Yāska's Nirukta*, viii. 6), an epithet of several Vedic gods, such as *Agni*, *Pūshan*, and *Brahmanaspati* (but especially of *Agni*), is identical with *Nairyōsanha* (Neryosangh), the name of an angel in the Zend-Avesta, who serves *Ahuramazda* as a messenger (see *Vend.* xxii.), in which capacity we find *Agni* and *Pūshan* in the Vedic hymns also. The word means "one praised by men," *i.e.*, renowned.

The Vedic god *Vāyu* (wind, especially the morning wind), "who first drinks the Soma at the morning sacrifice," is to be recognised in the spirit *Vayu* of the Zend-Avesta, who is supposed to be roaming everywhere (see

<sup>1</sup> See, about *Aramati* and *Armaiti*, the German Oriental Society, vol. the author's article in the journal of viii. (1854) p. 769-771.

the Râm Yasht above, p. 214). He is the only Vedic deity who is mentioned by name (*vayú*) in the Gâthas (Yas. liii. 6), but, of course, not called a *deva*, which word has always a bad meaning in the Zend-Avesta.

*Vṛitrahâ*, "killer of Vṛitra (a demon)," one of the most frequent epithets of *Indra* in the Vedic books, is to be recognised in the angel Verethraghna (Behrâm, see the Behrâm Yasht above, p. 213). It looks rather strange at the first glance, that we should find one and the same Vedic god, *Indra*, with his proper name "Indra" entered in the list of demons, and with his epithet "*Vṛitrahâ*" worshipped as a very high angel. But the problem is very easily solved if one bears in mind that *Vṛitrahâ* is applied in the hymns of the Rigveda not exclusively to *Indra*, but also to another deity, *Trita*, who occupied in the most ancient times the place of *Indra* as thunderer and killer of the demons of the air (Rv. i. 18, 71). That this *Trita* is identical with *Thraêtaona* (Frêdûn) in the Irânian legends, we shall soon see.

A very remarkable coincidence, as to the number of divine beings worshipped, is to be found between the statements of the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta. In the Vedas, especially in the Atharvaveda and the Brâhmaṇas, the gods number thirty-three (*trayas-triñśad devâḥ*) in all. Although the passages do not vary as to the number, they do not throughout agree as to the names of the individual gods by which the number is made up. In the Aitareya Brâhmaṇam (iii. 22, p. 67, of the author's edition) they are enumerated in the following order: eight *Vasavas*, eleven *Rudras*, twelve *Adityas*, one *Prajâpati*, and one *Vashaṭkâra*.<sup>1</sup> Instead of the last two we find *Dyâvâ-Prithivî* (heaven and earth) enumerated in the Shatapatha Brâhmaṇam (forming part of the white Yajurveda), iv. 5, 7, 2. In another passage (xi. 6, 3, 5) of the same work,

<sup>1</sup> This is a personification of the formula *Vaushat*, "may he (Agni) carry it up!" which is pronounced with a very much lengthened sound by the sacrificial priest, when throwing the offering into the fire. When personified, the efficacy of the sacrifice is to be understood.

we find Indra and Prajâpati mentioned as the last two. In the Râmâyana (iii. 2, 15) the two Ashvins are mentioned instead of them.<sup>1</sup> In the Atharvaveda (x. 7, 13, 22, 27), all the thirty-three gods are said to be included in Prajâpati (Brahma) as his limbs.<sup>2</sup>

With these thirty-three Devas of the Vedas we may compare the thirty-three *ratus*, or chiefs, for maintaining the best truths, as they are instituted by Mazda, and promulgated by Zarathushtra (Yas. i. 10). From their not being expressly enumerated according to their several classes, as the thirty-three Devas are in the Vedas, we may gather, with some certainty, that the "thirty-three *ratus*" was only a time-hallowed formula for enumerating the divine existences, the bearing and import of which was no longer understood by the Iranians after their separation from the Brahmans.

## 2.—NAMES AND LEGENDS OF HEROES.

There is not only a great similarity between, and even identity of, names of divine beings in both the Veda and Zend-Avesta, but a similar close resemblance extends also to the legends of heroic feats related in both scriptures. But, at the very outset, we can discover, notwithstanding this similarity, a striking difference between the Iranian and Brahmanical notions regarding these legends. The Brahmans attribute them generally to gods, the Iranians partly to great heroes and partly to angels. The following are some of the most striking resemblances:—

*Yima khshaita* (*Jamshéd*) and *Yama rájá*. The names

<sup>1</sup> The later tradition, as laid down in the Purânas, has increased the Vedic number of thirty-three deities to thirty-three *koṭis*, or 330 millions. This fact is a striking instance how unscrupulously and ridiculously the statements of the Vedas have been expanded and exaggerated in later times, which has contributed towards bringing Hinduism into the

deplorable state in which we find it now.

<sup>2</sup> This tendency towards establishing a kind of monotheism is, now and then, to be discovered in the ancient Vedic hymns. Compare, for instance, the celebrated passage, Rig-veda i. 164, 46, where it is said that "the wise men understand by the different gods only one being."

and epithets are the same; *Yima* is identical with *Yama*, and *khchaêta* means "king," the same as *râjâ*. The family name of both is the same: *Vivanhâo* or son of *Vivanghvat* in the Zend-Avesta (see the second fargard of the Vendidad above, p. 231), and *Vaivasvata* or son of *Vivasvat* in the Veda. In the Zend-Avesta *Yima* gathers round him men and animals in flocks, and fills the earth with them; and after the evils of winter had come over his territories, he leads a select number of the beings of the good creation to a secluded spot, where they enjoy uninterrupted happiness. According to the hymns of the Rigveda, 'Yama, the king, the gatherer of the people, has descried a path for many, which leads from the depths to the heights; he first found out a resting-place from which nobody can turn out the occupants; on the way the forefathers have gone, the sons will follow them' (Rigveda x. 14, 1, 2). *Yama* is here described as the progenitor of mankind; as the first mortal man he first experienced death, and first went up from the low valley of this earth to the heights of heaven, where he gathers round him all his descendants, who must follow in his track by the law of nature, and rules over all who have entered his dominions, which are full of bliss and happiness. This happy ruler of the blessed in paradise has been transformed, in the modern Hindu mythology, into the fearful god of death, the inexorable judge of men's doings, and the punisher of the wicked. In the legends of the Iranians, as extant in the Zend-Avesta and *Shâhnâmah*, he was the king of the golden age and the happy ruler of the Iranian tribes.

*Thrita*, *Thraêtaona* (*Frêdûn*) and *Trita*, *Traitana*. *Thrita*, one of the *Sâma* family (from which the great hero *Rustam* sprang), is in the Zend-Avesta (see p. 257) the first physician, the curer of the diseases created by *Ahri-man*; an idea which we find also attached to *Trita* in the Vedas. He is said, in the *Atharvaveda* (vi. 113, 1), to extinguish illness in men, as the gods have extinguished it in him; he must sleep for the gods (xix. 56, 4). He

grants a long life (Taittirīya Sañhitâ, Black Yajurveda, i. 8, 10, 2). Any evil thing is to be sent to him to be appeased (Rigveda viii. 47, 13). This circumstance is hinted at in the Zend-Avesta by the surname *Sâma*, which means "appeaser." He is further said to have been once thrown into a well, whence Bṛihaspati rescued him (Rv. i. 105, 17). The Indian tradition makes him a Ṛishi, and ascribes several hymns of the Rigveda to him (as for instance Rv. i. 105). There are some traits discoverable in the ancient hymns which make him appear rather like a god than a mortal man. He drinks Soma, like Indra, for obtaining strength to kill the demon Vṛitra (i. 187, 1), and, like him, he cleaves with his iron club the rocky cave where the cows (the celestial waters) are concealed (i. 52, 5).

*Thraëtaona* (*Frédân*) is easily recognised in the Vedic *Traitana*, who is said to have severed the head of a giant from his shoulders (Rv. i. 158, 3). His father is called *Athwyô*, which corresponds exactly with the frequent surname of *Trita* in the Vedas, viz., *Aptya*. *Trita* and *Traitana* seem to have been confounded together in the Veda, whereas originally they were quite distinct from one another. *Trita* was the name of a celebrated physician, and *Traitana* that of the conqueror of a giant or tyrant; the first belonged to the family of the *Sâmas*, the latter to the *Aptyas*. In the Zend-Avesta the original form of the legend is better preserved (see about *Thraëtaona*, p. 178).

*Kava Us* (*Kâkârûs* in the Shâhnâmah) and *Kâvya Ushanas*. He is one of the great heroes of the Iranians, and believed to have been a ruler over Iran. In the later Indian literature, he is identified with *Shukra*, the planet Venus, and said to have been during his lifetime the Guru (prophet or teacher) of the Daityas or Asuras, the enemies of the gods. But he is not viewed in this light in the ancient Vedic hymns. There he is associated with the god Indra, who calls himself *Kâvya Ushanâ* (Rv. iv. 26, 1), and is invoked by the name *Kavi Ushanâ* (Rv. i. 130, 9).

This Kâvya Ushanâ (meaning "Ushanâ, son of Kavi") installed Agni as a high-priest for mankind (Rv. viii. 23, 17); he led the heavenly cows (the clouds) to pasturage (Rv. i. 83, 5), and made Indra's iron club, by which the god killed his enemy Vṛitra. In the Bhagavad Gîta (x. 27) he is considered as the first of the poets, wherefore Krishna, who calls himself the first in every particular branch, identifies himself with Ushanas. According to the Mahâbhârata (i. 2544) he has four sons, who offer sacrifice to the Asuras. In the Iranian legend he does not appear as blameless; he is said to have been so proud and self-conceited as to endeavour to fly up to heaven, for which arrogance he was then severely punished.

The name *Dânava* is given, both in the Vedas and Zend-Avesta, to enemies with whom wars are to be waged. Compare Yt. v. 73, and Atharvaveda iv. 24, 2. In the Rigveda it is often a name of the archdemon Vṛitra, with whom Indra is fighting.

In the legend of Tishtrya (see p. 200) some of the particulars relating to *Indra* and *Bṛihaspati* in the Vedas may be recognised. Tishtrya cannot bring the rain from the sea Vouru-kasha over the earth, if not assisted by the prayers of men. In the same way Indra cannot release the celestial cows (the clouds) from the rocky cave, whither they have been carried by demons, without the assistance of *Bṛihaspati*, who is the representative of the prayers sent up by men to the gods, and the personification of their devotion and meditation.

### 3.—SACRIFICIAL RITES.

Although sacrifices are reduced to a few rites in the Parsi religion now-a-days, we may discover, on comparing them with the sacrificial customs of the Brahmans,<sup>1</sup> a great

<sup>1</sup> Most of the Vedic sacrifices are still in use. Those Brahmans, who perform all the sacrifices required for going to heaven, according to the Vedic system, are called *Agnihotris*. Their number was very large at the time of the Peshwas, and is even now considerable in some of the native states, as for instance, in the dominions of the Gaikwar at Baroda

similarity in the rites of the two religions. Some of the most striking of these resemblances will be here pointed out.

At the very outset the attentive reader of the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta will observe the identity of a good many terms referring to priestly functions. The very name for "priest" in the Zend-Avesta, *âthrava*, is to be recognised in the *atharvan* of the Vedas, by which term a priest of Fire and Soma is meant. The Vedic words *ish̥ti* (a series of invocations of several deities, accompanied by the offering of the sacrificial cakes, the so-called Puroḍâsha) and *âhuti* (the invocation of one deity with the offering, within the limits of the *ish̥ti*) are to be recognised in the *îshti* and *âzûiti* of the Zend-Avesta, where the original peculiar significations are lost, and only the general meanings "gift" and "invocation or praise" have survived. The particular names of several officiating priests, at the time of performing a solemn ceremony, are the same in both religions. The *Hotâ*, or reciter of the mantras of the Rigveda, is identical with the *Zaota* priest, while the *Adhvaryu* or managing priest, who has to prepare everything for the Hotâ, is the same with the *Rathwi* (now called Raspi), who is only the servant of the Zaota or chief priest. In the *Sraoshâvareza*, who represents the angel Srosh, the *Pratiprasthâtâ* of the Brahmanical sacrifices may be recognised, because this priest holds in his hand a wooden sword, during the time of sacrifice, to drive away the evil spirits, which weapon is constantly ascribed to Srosh for the same purpose (see p. 190). In the *Atarevakhshô*, who has charge of the vessel in which the

The performance of the manifold sacrifices enjoined to the Agnihotris, or the strict followers of the Vedic religion, entails too much expense upon an individual to be performed by many without public support. The Peshwas used to support them. Among all the Agnihotris (about twelve or fifteen) who presented them-

selves at the Dakshîna meeting at Poona, between the 15th November and 15th December 1861, only one could be found (and he was from Satâra) who had performed all the numerous sacrifices, some of which require from six to twelve days for their performance and an outlay of many thousands of rupis.

fire is, we find the *Agnâdhra* (who holds the fire) of the Brahmans.

The Yajishn or Ijashne ceremony, as performed by the Parsi priests now-a-days (see p. 139), contains all the elements which constitute the different parts (four or seven) of the *Jyotishṭoma* cycle of sacrifices, the prototype of all the Soma sacrifices. The *Agnishṭoma* (*i.e.*, praise of Agni, the fire), which is the opening sacrifice of this cycle and indispensable for every Agnihotri to gain the object wished for, viz., heaven, bears a particular resemblance to the performance of Ijashne. Of course, the whole ceremony is much shortened, and the rites changed in accordance with the more enlightened and humane spirit of the Zoroastrian religion. In the *Agnishṭoma* four goats must be killed and their flesh is partly offered to the gods by throwing it into Agni, the fire, who is the mediator between gods and men, and partly eaten by the sacrificer and the priests. During the Ijashne ceremony no animal is killed; only some hair of an ox is placed in a small vessel and shown, together with the other things, to the fire. This is now-a-days the only remnant of animal sacrifice on this occasion, but formerly they used a piece of meat besides. The *Puroḍâsha* of the Brahmans, or the sacrificial cakes, which must be offered to different deities in a certain order, during the recital of two mantras for each deity, is changed into a flat kind of bread (similar to a very small pancake), called *Darûn*. The fresh milk, required at the time of performing the *Upasad* ceremony (see p. 270), is to be recognised in the *gâush jîvya* (see p. 139). Ghî, butter, &c., required for less important ceremonies at the time of the *Agnishṭoma* (when making the so-called *Prayâjas* for the six seasons) are represented by the *gâush hudhâo* (see p. 139). The *Zaothra* or consecrated water is required at the commencement of the Brahmanical sacrifices also, where it is called *udaka shânta*.

The most important part of the offerings in both the *Jyotishṭoma* sacrifices and the Ijashne ceremony, is the

juice of the Soma plant. In both the twigs of the plant itself (the Brahmans use the stalks of the Pûtika, which is a substitute for the original Soma, and the Parsis use the branches of a particular shrub which grows in Persia) in their natural state are brought to the sacred spot, where the ceremony is to take place, and the juice is there extracted during the recital of prayers. The contrivances used for obtaining the juice, as well as the vessels employed, are somewhat different, but, on closer inquiry, an original identity may be recognised. The Brahmans beat the stalks of the plant, which are placed on a large flat stone, with another smaller stone till they form a single mass; this is then put into a vessel and water is poured over it. After some time this water, which has extracted the greenish juice, is poured through a cloth which serves as a strainer, into another vessel. The Parsi priests use, instead of stones, a metal mortar with a pestle whereby the twigs of the Homa plant, together with one of the pomegranate tree, are bruised, and they then pour water over them to obtain the juice, which is strained through a metal saucer with nine holes. This juice (Parahaoma) has a yellow colour, and only very little of it is drunk by one of the two priests (the Zaota) who must be present, whereas all the Brahmanical priests (sixteen in number), whose services are required at the Jyotishṭoma, must drink the Soma juice, and some of the chief priests (such as the Adhvaryu and Hotâ) must even take a very large quantity. The Parsi priests never throw any of the juice into the fire, but the Brahmans must first offer a certain quantity of the intoxicating juice to different deities, by throwing it from variously-shaped wooden vessels into the fire, before they are allowed to taste "the sweet liquor." The Parsi priests only show it to the fire, and then drink it. Afterwards the juice is prepared a second time by the chief priest (Zaota) and then thrown into a well. These two preparations of the Homa juice correspond to the morning libation (*pr̥d̥tāḥ savana*) and mid-day libation (*madhyandina*)

*savana*) of the Brahmans; for the third, or evening libation, there was no opportunity in the Parsi ritual, because no sacrificial rites are allowed to be performed in the evening or night time.

The Barsom (*Baresma*), or the bundle of twigs which is indispensable at the time of reciting Ijashne, is to be traced to one of the sacrificial rites at the great Soma sacrifices. It has hitherto been erroneously identified with the *Barhis* or sacred grass (Kusha grass is used) of the Brahmans, which they spread at their sacrifices as a seat for the gods who are expected to come. But the close connection of the Barsom with the Ijashne ceremony, and the circumstances that wood (branches of a particular tree) and not grass is taken, and that these branches are laid on a stand, not spread on the floor, lead to the conclusion that it does not represent the seat for the divine beings, as the Kusha grass does. It refers, in all likelihood, to a peculiar rite at the great Soma sacrifices, which is as yet little known, but about which the author had an opportunity of obtaining oral information. At the time of the Soma libation (called *Savana*), which is to be performed three times on the same day, from 8-12 A.M. (morning libation), 1-5 P.M. (mid-day libation), 6-11 P.M. (evening libation), the three Sâmaveda priests, the Udgâtâ, the Prastotâ, and the Pratihartâ, require a certain number of wooden sticks to be placed in a certain order when chanting the sacred Sâmans (verses of the Sâmaveda). They use for this purpose the wood of the Udumbara tree, and call them *kusha*, which name is generally given to the sacred grass. In the Agnishtoma fifteen such sticks are required at the morning libation, seventeen at noon, and twenty-one in the evening; in other sacrifices, such as the Aptoryâma, even a much larger number of such sticks is required. The three singers must then chant successively, one by one, in a very solemn manner, the five parts,<sup>1</sup> into which every

<sup>1</sup> Such Sâmans are called *pancha-* viz.: *Prastâva* (prelude), *Udgâtâ bhaktika*, i.e., divided into five parts, (the principal part, to be chanted by

Sâman or verse adapted for singing is divided at certain sacrifices, while putting some of the sticks into a certain proper order. This ceremony is considered to be most essential, and unless observed and properly performed, all the effect of the Sâmans (which are believed to carry the sacrificer up to heaven, the most important of all being called *Rathantaram*, "carriage") is lost.

At the same time there is another peculiar custom to be observed, which may be traced in the Yasna also. As soon as the singers have chanted their verse, one of the Hotâs must repeat a series of mantras from the Rigveda (not in the usual way of repetition, but in one approaching the recital of the Yajurveda), in order to praise and extol the Sâman, which ceremony is called *Shastram*. At the end of the different Hâs of the Yasna, especially its Gâtha portion, verses of these hymns are often invoked as divine beings, and in Yas. xix. 6 (p. 186) we have seen that it is considered very meritorious to worship the Ahuna-vairyâ formula after having repeated it.

With regard to the division of the *Sâmans* into five parts, it may be remarked that the Ahuna-vairyâ formula, which is as important for the Parsis as the Rathantaram Sâman was for the Vedic Brahmans, was also divided into five parts (see p. 188).

In the Afringân ceremony of the Parsis (see p. 224) there may be discovered a trace of the Brahmanical Apri ceremony (see Aitareya Brâhmana, ii. 4, p. 28, of the author's edition), which is preparatory to the killing and offering of the sacrificial goats. The name is the same: *â-prî* in Sanskrit, *â-frî* in the Avesta (the formula used being *âfrînâmi*), which literally means to "invite;" with which invitation the name of the being or beings, in whose honour the ceremony is being performed, must always be mentioned. The Parsis mention the name of a deceased person, or of an angel; the Brahmans insert the names of

the Udgâtâ), *Pratihâra* (response), (great finale), to be chanted by all *Upâdrava* (little finale), and *Nidhana* three.

different deities<sup>1</sup> (there are eleven invocations), who are expected to come and enjoy the meal prepared for them. These solemn invitations being accompanied with a blessing, the Parsis understand by this ceremony a benediction, which form it seems to have assumed at a very early time.

The *Darsha pūrṇama ishṭi* (new and full moon sacrifice) seems to correspond with the *Darūn* ceremony of the Parsis. Both are very simple; the Brahmans use chiefly the Puroḍāsha, or sacrificial cakes, the Parsis the sacred bread (*Darūn*), which corresponds to the Puroḍāsha.

The *Châturmâsya ishṭi*, or the sacrifice offered every four months or two seasons, corresponds to the Gahanbâr ceremony of the Parsis, which is celebrated six times a year. Sacrificing animals was essential for the proper performance of these ceremonies among the Parsis until recent times; so it is with the Brahmans also. But as to animal sacrifice, there is always a great difference between the Brahmanical and Zoroastrian rites. The Brahmans must throw some parts of the slaughtered animal, such as the *vapâ* (peritoneum), into the fire; while the Parsis simply consecrate the flesh and eat it as a solemn meal, without throwing anything into the fire. On such occasions even the Brahmans now-a-days also eat some of the flesh.

#### 4.—RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES, DOMESTIC RITES, AND COSMOGRAPHICAL OPINIONS.

Although there are a good many similarities to be discovered in respect to observances, domestic rites, &c., we must confine our remarks to a few of the most striking points of coincidence.

The great purification ceremony (see p. 241), by means of cow's urine (called *gômêz*), as practised by the Parsis to this day, may be compared with a similar observance of the Brahmans. The latter use, in order to remove all

<sup>1</sup> See Yâska's *Nirukta*, viii. 4-21, and Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 463-467.

inward impurity from the body, the so-called *Panchagavyam*, or five products of the most sacred animal, the cow, one of which is her urine. This custom comes from the most ancient times, when this liquid was regarded as a very effective remedy against any disorder of the bodily organs. Such remedies as cow-dung and cow's urine have been used even on the continent of Europe by peasant physicians down to our times.

To the Parsis, as well as to the Brahmans, the investiture with the sacred thread (called *kustī* by the Parsis, *aiwyađonhanem* in the Zend-Avesta) is enjoined as a religious duty. As long as this ceremony has not been performed, one is no real member of either the Brahmanical or Zoroastrian community. The time for performing it lasts among the Brahmans from the eighth to the sixteenth year (see Yājñavalkya, i. 14, 37); the Parsis are invested with the *Kustī* in their seventh year.

With regard to the funeral rites of both religions some similarities may be pointed out. After the death of a man, Brahmans as well as Parsis must pray to raise the soul of the deceased up to heaven, which is the so-called third-day's ceremony of the Parsis. On the tenth day after the death, the Parsis perform a certain ceremony (*Ijashne* is read), and the Brahmans use the important ceremony of *Kākasparsha*, that is, they expose a ball of rice to be taken by a crow.

As to cosmographical opinions the Brahmans divide the whole world into seven *dvīpas*, the Parsis into seven *kēshvars* (*karshvare* in the Avesta), *i.e.*, zones or regions. Both acknowledge a central mountain, which is called by the former *Meru*, by the latter *Alborz* (*Haró berezaiti* in the Avesta).

## II.—ORIGIN OF THE ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION.—SPITAMA ZARATHUSHTRA AND HIS PROBABLE AGE.

After having established, in the preceding section, the fact that a close and intimate connection once existed

between the religion of the Parsis and that of the Brahmans, we may now proceed to trace the origin of the Zoroastrian religion, and characterise the period at which it must have arisen.

I.—TRACES OF THE ORIGIN TO BE FOUND BOTH IN THE VEDAS  
AND ZEND-AVESTA.

In the Vedas, as well as in the older portions of the Zend-Avesta (see the Gâthas), there are sufficient traces to be discovered that the Zoroastrian religion arose out of a vital struggle against the form which the Brahmanical religion had assumed at a certain early period. Both creeds are known as diametrically opposed to one another in both their scriptures. One is called the belief of the Asuras (*Ahura* in the Avesta), the other that of the Devas. This circumstance cannot be merely accidental, the less so, as we find the word *Asura* used in the older Vedic hymns (see p. 268) in a perfectly good sense, and as a name of several Devas themselves, which fact clearly shows that there must have been once a vital struggle between the professors of the Deva and those of the Ahura religion, in consequence of which the originally good meaning of Asura was changed to a bad one.

Although it is, therefore, impossible to deny the existence of the original close connection between the Deva and Asura religions, some might still be inclined to doubt whether the adherents of the Deva religion were actually the direct ancestors of the present Brahmans. It is true the word *deva*<sup>1</sup> and the cognate word *dyaus* are found in most of the Aryan languages with the meaning of "heaven," or "divine being," and the Deva-worshippers, combated by the Zoroastrians, might be another kindred tribe of the Aryan stock, different from the Brahmans. But the fact that several of the Brahmanical Devas are mentioned by

<sup>1</sup> Best preserved in the Lithuanian *dievas*, "god," and in Latin *deus*. The cognate *dyaus*, "heaven," is extant in the Greek *Zeus*, gen. *Dios*, and the name of an ancient Teutonic god *Tius*, preserved in the word "Tuesday" (in Anglo-Saxon: *Tives dæg*).

name in the Zend-Avesta, leaves no doubt whatever that the opponents of the Ahura religion actually were the ancient Brahmans; for the names of the Devas, mentioned in the Zend-Avesta, such as Indra, Sharva, Nâsatya, are purely Brahmanical, and unknown to any other nation of the Aryan stock.

We have seen above that the names of the Indian Devas or gods were not all entered in the list of the Zoroastrian Devas or demons, but some of them retained their old dignity by being transformed, in accordance with the new spirit of the Zoroastrian religion, from gods into angels (Yazatas). The names of these are also identical with those of some Vedic deities, such as Aryaman, Mitra, Aramati, &c.

Some of the ancient gods occur with one name in the list of angels, and with another in that of the demons. Thus, for instance, the Zoroastrian demon, *Indra*, has become, under his other name, Verethraghna (*Vritrahâ*), one of the mightiest angels, as has been shown above (p. 275).

These facts throw some light upon the age in which that great religious struggle took place, the consequence of which was the entire separation of the ancient Iranians from the Brahmans, and the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion. It must have occurred at the time when Indra was the chief god of the Brahmans. This was the case at that early period to which we must assign the composition of the majority of the Vedic hymns, before the Brahmans had immigrated into Hindustan Proper. In the post-Vedic period, whose events called into existence the great epic poems *Mahâbhârata* and *Râmâyana*, we find Indra's place at the head of the gods occupied by the Trimûrti of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, which idea is utterly foreign to the Vedic hymns. The Trimûrti never being alluded to in the Zend-Avesta, we must assign to the religious struggle a much earlier date.

Before proceeding to fix the probable age of the origin

of the Zoroastrian religion, some facts derived from passages in the Vedas and Gâthas may be adduced, which throw much light upon this difficult subject.

The priests and prophets of the Devas are mentioned by the names *kavi*, *karapan*, and *usikhsh* in the Gâthas (see Yas. xxxii. 14; xlv. 20; xlvi. 11; xlviii. 10; li. 14). The first is of very frequent occurrence in the Vedic hymns, the third is also occasionally met with there, and the verb (*kalpayati*)<sup>1</sup> and noun (*kalpa*) connected with the second name are very frequently employed. *Kavi*, which means "poet" in the classical Sanskrit, is the name of seers and priests in the Vedic hymns (Rv. i. 128, 8; 142, 8; 188, 1); by drinking the "delicious," but intoxicating, Soma juice, the power of Kavi is attainable (Rv. i. 91, 14); the term is, therefore, applied to the Soma priest (Rv. ix. 37, 6; 72, 6); these Kavis or seers, being believed to be in possession of divine revelation and secret wisdom, were consulted as prophets (Rv. i. 164, 6; vii. 86, 3). The gods themselves, especially Agni, are called by this name (Rv. ii. 23, 1; iii. 14, 1), which circumstance clearly shows that it was a high title, which could be given only to the heads and spiritual guides of the ancient Brahmanical community.

Synonymous with this name is *ushij*, which exactly corresponds to *usikhsh* (nom.) in the Gâthas (Yas. xlv. 20). It means "a wise, intelligent man," as one may see from such passages as Rv. ii. 21, 5; x. 46, 2, and Shânkhâyana's Grihya Sûtra vi. 12, 19, where it changes places with *kavi*, as is the case in Yas. xlv. 20, also.

By the *karapanô*, who are mentioned together with the *kâvayas* in the Gâthas, we must understand specially the sacrificial priests, the performers of the sacrifices, those men who are known nowadays to the Brahmans by the name of Shrotriyas. As to its grammatical formation, this word is derived from a root *karap*, which corresponds exactly with the Sanskrit root *kalp*, "to perform a cere-

<sup>1</sup> The sound *l*, being completely unknown in the Avesta language, is there always represented by *r*.

mony," whence the word *kalpa*, "the ritual, or the doctrine of the ceremonies," is derived. *Karapanô*, therefore, means really "performers of sacrificial rites."

These two names, *kavi* and *karapan*, designate in the fullest sense all the spiritual guides of the professors of the Deva religion, who tried to put down the adherents of the Ahuramazda religion, and we necessarily find, therefore, a bad meaning attached to them in the Gâthas. This appears the more strange, as the word *kavi* itself forms part of the names of highly celebrated personages of Iranian antiquity, such as Kavi Husrava (Kaî Khusro), Kavi Kavâta (Kaî Kabâd), Kavi Vishtâspa (Kaî Gushtâsp), &c., and has become, in its derived adjectival form "Kayanian," the designation of a whole dynasty of the ancient Bactrian rulers.

Here the question naturally arises, how could a designation, which distinguished the bitterest enemies of the Zoroastrian religion, be applied to kings who were, like Kavi Vishtâspa, believed to be its staunchest friends and protectors? The only reasonable answer is, that before the outbreak of the schism, when the Iranians and Brahmans lived peacefully together, the Kavis were at the head of both communities; and that, on account of their violent opposition to the religious and social reforms which were adopted by some of the Aryan tribes, such as the Iranians, their very name was branded, and became a word of abomination with the Zoroastrians. But the designation having been already closely connected with their ancient history, and having become the constant epithet of some of their greatest heroes and kings, it was difficult, nay, impossible, to expunge it entirely in its good and high sense from the language. The adversaries of the Kavis, therefore, had to rest satisfied with a slight change of the hateful word when they wished to use it with a good meaning. Thus we actually find this word in the old texts, when forming part of the names of the great Iranian heroes and kings, changed from its only true and original

form *Kavi* into *Kavâ*, as, for instance, *Kavâ Vishtâspa*, instead of *Kavi Vishtâspa*.<sup>1</sup>

Now this word *Kavâ* became a party name, denoting the opponents of the Deva religion. And in this sense we find it unmistakeably employed in the ancient Vedic hymns. *Kavâsakha* or *Kavâri* or *Kavatnu*, which all mean "followers of Kavâ or adherents of Kava," are names, given to the enemies of Indra and the despisers of his sacred drink (Soma). In one passage (Rv. v. 34, 3) *Kavâsakha* is even called a *maghavâ*, by which name the disciples and earliest followers of Zarathushtra are denoted in the Gâthas (see p. 169). Indra is there said to turn out the Maghava, who follows the Kava party, from his possession, which refers to the settlements (*gaëthas*) of the Iranians.

That Zarathushtra's attacks were really directed against the Soma sacrifices of the Brahmans, undeniably follows from several passages of the Gâthas (see Yas. xxxii. 3; xlvi. 10). This is not to be wondered at, if we bear in mind that the Indian tribes, as described in the ancient hymns of the Vedas, never engaged themselves in their frequent predatory excursions for stealing cows, horses, sheep, &c., without having previously secured the assistance of Indra by preparing for him a solemn Soma feast. The Karapans dressed it in due manner, and the Kavis composed or applied those verses which were best calculated to induce Indra to accept the invitation. The Kavis were believed to recognise by certain signs the arrival of the god. After he had enjoyed the sweet beverage, the delicious honey, and was supposed to be totally inebriated, then the Kavis promised victory. The inroads were undertaken, headed by those Kavis who had previously intoxicated themselves, and they appear to have been in most cases successful. The Iranian settlers, who had to suffer so much from these attacks (see p. 173), ascribed the success to those Soma sacrifices, which, therefore, must

<sup>1</sup> See further particulars in the author's work on the Gâthas, i. p. 179, 180, and ii. p. 238-41.

have been objects of abomination and horror to them. But the belief in the great efficacy of such a ceremony, as the solemn squeezing and preparing of the Soma juice, being too deeply rooted in the minds of the Iranians, as well as in those of the ancient Indians, the Iranians forsook only the old Aryan fashion of preparing the sacred drink, and invented one of their own, which was more in accordance with the spirit of their new religion (see p. 282). As we have seen, Spitama Zarathushtra himself never mentions this reformed Homa (Soma) ceremony in the Gâthas; it is doubtful, therefore, whether it existed in his time, or, if so, whether he approved of it. It is true, legends were afterwards circulated, to the effect that he himself had given his sanction to this ceremony, as the reader will have learned from the Homa Yasht (see p. 176).

Having established now, beyond any reasonable doubt, the fact that the Zoroastrian religion arose in consequence of a serious conflict of the Iranians with those other Aryan tribes which emigrated into Hindustan Proper, and whose leaders became in later times the founders of Brahmanism, the questions as to the cause of this religious schism, the leader of the seceding party, and the time at which this great event happened, have to be decided,

## 2.—CAUSES OF THE SCHISM.

The causes, which led to the schism, may be readily learned from the more ancient parts of the Zend-Avesta, especially from the Gâthas. They were of a social and political as well as of a religious nature. The Aryan tribes, after they had left their original home, which was in all likelihood a cold country (see the allusions to it in the first and second Fargards of the Vendidad), led mainly a pastoral life, and cultivated only occasionally some patches of land for their own support. In this state we find the ancient Aryan community throughout the earlier Vedic period, and the Brahmanical tribes were given to this nomadic life as long as they occupied the upper part

of the Panjâb, whence they afterwards emigrated into Hindustan Proper. Some of these tribes, whom we may style the Iranians proper, became soon weary of these constant wanderings, and after having reached such places between the Oxus and Yaxartes rivers and the highland of Bactria as were deemed fit for permanent settlements, they forsook the pastoral life of their ancestors and their brother tribes, and became agriculturists. In consequence of this change the Iranians estranged themselves from the other Aryan tribes, which still clung to the ancestral occupation, and allured by the hope of obtaining booty, regarded those settlements as the most suitable objects for their incursions and skirmishes. How frequent these attacks of the Deva-worshippers upon the property of the Mazda-yasnians must have been, the reader can learn from the formula, by which the Deva-worshippers abjured their religion, and entered the community of the Iranians (see p. 173), and from some verses of the Gâthas (especially Yas. xxxii. and xlvi.).

The success of the attacking Deva-worshippers was, as we have seen, mainly ascribed to spells (mantras) and sacrificial skill. Their religion, therefore, must have become an object of hatred in the eyes of the Iranians, although the latter were well aware that it was closely related to their own, or even to a certain extent identical with it. Their own religion, therefore, had to be totally changed, in order to break up all communication whatever with the devastators of their settlements. The Deva religion was branded as the source of all mischief and wickedness, and instead of it, the Ahura religion of agriculture was instituted, which separated them thenceforth for ever from their Brahmanical brethren.

If we ask who instituted this Ahura religion, we can hardly believe that it was the work of a single man only, though it is not to be denied that the peculiar form which it assumed was mainly due to one great personage, Spitama Zarathushtra

## 3.—SPITAMA ZARATHUSHTRA.

In the Gâthas we find Zarathushtra alluding to old revelations (Yas. xlvi. 6), and praising the wisdom of the *Saoshyantô*, "fire-priests" (Yas. xlvi. 3 ; xlviii. 12). He exhorts his party to respect and revere the *Angra* (Yas. xliii. 15), *i.e.*, the *Angiras* of the Vedic hymns, who formed one of the most ancient and celebrated priestly families of the ancient Aryans, and who seem to have been more closely connected with the ante-Zoroastrian form of the Parsi religion than any other of the later Brahmanical families. These *Angiras* are often mentioned together with the *Atharvans* or fire-priests (which word, in the form *âthrava*, is the general name given to the priest caste in the *Zend-Avesta*), and both are regarded in the Vedic literature as the authors of the *Atharvaveda* which is called the *Veda* of the *Atharvângiras*, or the *Atharvâna*, or *Angirasa veda*, *i.e.*, the *Veda* of the *Atharvans* or *Angiras*.<sup>1</sup> This work was for a long time not acknowledged as a proper *Veda* by the Brahmins, because its contents, which consist chiefly of spells, charms, curses, mantras for killing enemies, &c., were mostly foreign to the three other *Vedas*, which alone were originally required for sacrifices. On comparing its contents with some passages in the *Yashts* and *Vendidad*, we discover a great similarity.

Although a close connection between the ante-Zoroastrian and the *Atharvana* and *Angirasa* religion can hardly be doubted, yet this relationship refers only to the magical part, which was believed by the ancient Greeks to be the very substance and nature of the Zoroastrian religion.

In all likelihood, as the names *Atharvana* and *Angirasa*, or fire-priests, indicate, the worship of fire was a characteristic feature of this ancient religion.

The *Saoshyantô*, or fire-priests, who seem to be identical with the *Atharvans*, are to be regarded as the real predecessors of *Spitama Zarathushtra*, who paved the way for

<sup>1</sup> See Max Müller's *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 448.