

Esoteric Insights into Zoroastrianism

A compilation from H.P. Blavatsky's articles "Zoroastrianism in the Light of Occult Philosophy" and "The Devil's Own: Thoughts on Ormuzd and Ahriman" along with excerpts from the book "The Zoroastrian Philosophy and Way of Life" by B.P. Wadia.

HPB: "No more philosophically profound, nor grander or more graphic and suggestive type exists among the allegories of the World-religions than that of the two Brother-Powers of the Mazdean religion, called Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, better known in their modernized form of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Of these two emanations, "Sons of Boundless Time" - *Zeruana Akarana* - itself issued from the Supreme and Unknowable Principle, the one is the embodiment of "Good Thought" (*Vohu Mano*), the other of "Evil Thought" (*Ako Mano*). The "King of Light" or Ahura Mazda, emanates from Primordial Light and forms or creates by means of the "Word," Honover (*Ahuna Vairya*), a pure and holy world. But Angra Mainyu, though born as pure as his elder brother, becomes jealous of him, and mars everything in the Universe, as on the earth, creating Sin and Evil everywhere he goes. . . .

"The real order would be: the Supreme or the One Light, called the Eternal; then *Zeruana Akarana* (compare Vishnu in his abstract sense as the Boundless pervading All and *Kala*, Time), the *Fravashi* or the *Ferouer* of Ormuzd (that eternal Double or Image which precedes and survives every god, man and animal), and finally *Ahura Mazda* Himself."

"The two Powers are inseparable on our present plane and at this stage of evolution, and would be meaningless, one without the other. They are, therefore, the two opposite poles of the *One* Manifested Creative Power, whether the latter is viewed as a Universal Cosmic Force which builds worlds, or under its anthropomorphic aspect, when its vehicle is thinking man. For Ormuzd and Ahriman are the respective representatives of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness, of the spiritual and the material elements in man, and also in the Universe and everything contained in it. . . . The Parsis may have lost most of the keys that unlock the true interpretations of their sacred and poetical allegories, but the symbolism of Ormuzd and Ahriman is so self-evident, that even the Orientalists have ended by interpreting it, in its broad features, almost correctly. . . .

". . . about half a century ago, at Bombay . . . the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the Orientalist, debated the subject with the Parsi high-priests, the *Dasturs*. The latter very philosophically denied his imputation, and demonstrated to him that far from accepting the texts of their Sacred Books literally, they regarded them as allegorical as far as Ahriman was concerned. For them he is a symbolical representation of the disturbing elements in Kosmos and of the evil passions and animal instincts in man (*Vendidad*)."

HPB: "Thus, Angra Mainyu, being confessedly, in one of its aspects, the embodiment of man's lowest nature, with its fierce passions and unholy desires, "his hell" must be sought for and located on earth. In occult philosophy there is no other hell - nor can any state be comparable to that of a specially unhappy human wretch. . . . Ahura Mazda alone, being the divine, and therefore the immortal and eternal symbol of "Boundless Time," is the secure refuge, the spiritual haven of man. . . . Ahura Mazda stands here no longer as the supreme One God of eternal *Good* and *Light* but as its own Ray, the divine EGO which informs man - under whatever name. . . . the beneficent ray of Ahura Mazda, the radiant EGO-SUN . . . Angra Mainyu is only a periodical and temporary Evil. He is Heterogeneity as developed from Homogeneity. Descending along the scale of differentiating nature on the cosmic planes, both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu become, at the appointed time, the representatives and the

dual type of man, the inner or divine INDIVIDUALITY, and the outer *personality*, a compound of visible and invisible elements and principles. As in heaven, so on earth; as above, so below. If the divine *light* in man, the Higher Spirit-Soul, forms, including itself, the seven Ameshaspends (of which Ormuzd is the seventh, or the synthesis), Ahriman, the thinking *personality*, the animal soul, has in its turn its seven Archidevs opposed to the seven Ameshaspends.

"During our life cycle, the good Yazatas, the 99,999 Fravashi (or Ferouers) and even the "Holy Seven," the Ameshaspends themselves ("The gods of light, the "immortal seven," of whom Ahura Mazda is the seventh. They are deified abstractions."), are almost powerless against the Host of wicked Devs - the symbols of cosmic opposing powers and of human passions and sins. Fiends of evil, their presence radiates and fills the world with moral and physical ills: with disease, poverty, envy and pride, with despair, drunkenness, treachery, injustice, and cruelty, with anger and bloody-handed murder. Under the advice of Ahriman, man from the first made his fellow-man to weep and suffer. This state of things will cease only on the day when Ahura Mazda, the sevenfold deity, assumes his seventh name or aspect. Then, will he send his "Holy Word" *Mathra Spenta* (or the "Soul of Ahura") to incarnate in Saoshyant (Sosiosh), and the latter will conquer Angra Mainyu. . . . As an occult teaching says: During each of the seven periods (Races) the chief ruling *Light* is given a new name; *i.e.*, one of the seven *hidden* names, the initials of which compose the *mystery name* of the Septenary Host, viewed as one."

BPW: "In Zend tradition Ahuramazda and Angramainyu are *not* two opposing beings. . . . The two primeval spirits, Spento and Angro, are impersonal, universal and omnipotent forces - centripetal and centrifugal. Out of them emanate the seven hierarchies of spiritual intelligence and the seven material kingdoms of nature. Spento and Angro are like the Purusha and Prakriti of Indian philosophy. Just as "Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways" (*Gita*, VIII) so do Spento- and Angro- Mainyus commence, sustain, and renovate the cycle of necessity, Ahuramazda himself being the primal expression thereof. . . . These two, the centripetal and centrifugal forces, are the basis of the universe. They cause manifestation and dissolution."

HPB: "The Magian knew not of any *Supreme* "personal" individuality. He recognized but Ahura, the "Lord" - the seventh Principle in man - and "prayed," *i.e.*, made efforts during the hours of meditation, to assimilate with, and merge his other principles, that are dependent on the physical body and ever under the sway of Angra Mainyu (or matter), into the only pure, holy and *eternal* principle in him, his divine monad. To whom else could he pray? Who was "Ormuzd" if not the chief *Spenta Mainyu*, the monad, the god-principle in us? . . . Does not this show that Ahura-Mazda is something which can be explained and defined only by the Occult Doctrine? And wisely does it explain to us that Ahura Mazda is our own inner, truly *personal* God and that he is our Spiritual light and the "Creator of the material world," *i.e.*, the architect and shaper of the Microcosm, *Man*, when the latter knows how to resist Angra-Mainyu, or Kama - lust or material desires - by relying on him who overshadows him, the Ahura-Mazda or Spiritual Essence."

BPW: "The aspect of the dual powers which persists with such tenacity in Zoroastrianism is the psychologic-human one, and while Ahriman has been personified and has become, like Satan, a living entity for the superstitious, for the cultured he is but a force within man, his own lower nature."

HPB: "Ahura-Mazda is also the father of Tistrya, the *rain-bestowing* god (the sixth Principle) that fructifies the parched soil of the fifth and fourth, and helps them to bear good fruit through

their own exertions, *i.e.*, by tasting of *Haoma*, the tree of eternal life, through spiritual enlightenment. Finally and undeniably Ahura-Mazda being called the chief and father of the six "*Amesha Spentas*," or of the six principles of which he is the seventh, the question is settled. He is "Ahura" or rather Asura, the "living spirit in man," the first of whose twenty different names he gives as "Ahmi," "I am." . . . Ahriman is the allegorical representation of the lower human principles, as Ahura-Mazda is that of the higher."

BPW: "Omnipresent Deity, a Living Nature, are the central truths of Zoroastrianism. The physical and visible Nature is energized by the psychical and both are ensouled and enveloped by the spiritual. Ahuramazda, the Sovereign Spirit, is the Universal Power, one with his manifestation. Of course he is personified and the latter has become an object of prayer and worship with the ignorant. The *Ahuramazda Yasht* is highly reminiscent of the 9th, 10th, and 11th discourses of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Like Shri Krishna, Ahuramazda in answer to his favourite disciple, Zoroaster, describes his own nature. He gives his own many names characteristic of that nature and starts with "Ahmi - I am.""

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BPW: "Zoroastrianism is widely known as the religion of fire-worship. Fire, however, is a symbol, certain phases of which are commonly accepted. It is not grasped that in Zoroastrianism Fire as a symbol-emblem is intended to show the identity of nature between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The variety of fires mentioned; the mode of building up fire (1) in home, (2) in small temples, and (3) in big temples; the custom of never allowing these fires to be extinguished or polluted; and other matters have to be understood as parable-tenets of the science of esoteric psychology.

"In numerous places Fire is named the "Son of Ahura-mazda," whose Sanskrit equivalent is *manasa-putra* - the mind-born son of Brahmā. The Fire is the reincarnating ego and has two aspects, one stationary, immovable, the other changing and growing. The non-moving is the Divine Ego whose ray is the other. The former sits, the watching spectator, saying, "What does he who comes and goes bring to him who is motionless?" But this motionless Fire is "the purifier," "the maker of prosperity," is "strong and immortal" and is named "the warrior." He is also designated "the cook who cooks the day and night meals of mortals," *i.e.*, he is the supplier of experiences in waking and sleeping conditions, as also in life and death."

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BPW: "Though Reincarnation as a doctrine is not clearly and explicitly taught in the fragments now extant, there are numerous passages . . . which clearly indicate that it was well known."

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BPW: "We will outline here two schemes of human constitution to be found in the Avesta:

"I. An eightfold being composed of (1) *Fravarshi* - the triple Atma, the Individual Ray of the Impersonal Deity; (2) *Urvan* - the Soul, the *Buddhi* and *Manas*, the Discriminator and Thinker, the dual Power-Shakti of Atma-Ishvara or *Fravarshi*; (3) *Bodhas*, the faculty of the *Urvan* whereby he chooses, selects and devises ways and means of his own growth; (4) *Tevishes*, the Desire-Kama which inclines towards *Bodhas* or gravitates towards (5) *Keherpas*, which is Persian Kaleb Aerial form or mould, *Linga Sharira*; (6) *Ushtanas* is the Vital-heat or *prana*; (7) and (8) are the Bony structure and the Body, symbolic representatives of the immortal and mortal constituents of the body whose true import the esotericist is familiar with.

"II. A fivefold being composed of (1) Ahu - the Self, the Personality in incarnation, the lower self with its quaternary principles; (2) Daena, its ever-present and watchful holy insight, its pure and wise spouse who stores away all that is worthy in the myriad experiences of the first, and who alone can enable it to understand the tenets of the True Faith (Din); she forms the link between the first and the higher triad and after the death of the personality appears to it - objectivized form of its own experiences . . .; (3) Bodhas; (4) Urvan; (5) Fravarshi are the same as in the first classification."

BPW: "The doctrine of Fravarshi is of special interest to the student of Theosophy. Every creature, whatever the body may happen to be, has its spiritual counterpart which is Fravarshi. To begin with, Ahuramazda himself has his Fravarshi and he recommends Zoroaster to invoke his Fravarshi and not himself, *i.e.*, the impersonal and true essence of Deity, one with Zoroaster's own atman (or Christos), not the false and personal appearance. The seven Amesha-spentas, all the religious teachers like Zoroaster, all warrior-souls, all evil-doers, animals, plants, minerals, everything has a Fravarshi. The coming into manifestation of these Fravarshis, their evolution and ultimate destiny are all described in Zend, Pahalvi and Persian books. As H.P.B. points out, this doctrine influenced Church-Christianity, and Ferouer is but a corrupted concept-word of the Zend Fravarshi."

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HPB: "And now, if we are asked, as we have been repeatedly, if there are indeed men in whose power it is to give the correct version of true Zoroastrianism, then why do not they do so? - we answer, "because very few will believe it in *this* our age." Instead of benefiting men, they would but hurt the devotees of those truths. And as to giving to the world more information about the locality known as Airyanam Vaego, we need point but to the sentence in *Fargard I*, in which we find Ahura Mazda saying to Spitama, "the most benevolent," that he had made every land - even though it had no charms whatever in it - dear to its dwellers, since otherwise the "whole living world would have invaded the Airyanam Vaego" (v. 2). Hence unable to satisfy our readers, we can say but very little. . . . Why do we find Zoroaster in the *Bundehesh* offering a sacrifice in "Iran Vej" - distorted name for Airyanam Vaego - and where or what was this country? Though some Orientalists call it "no real country," and others identify it with the basin of the Aras, the latter has nothing to do with Airyanam Vaego. The last Zarathust may have chosen, and he has so chosen, the banks of the Aras for the cradle of his newly *reborn* religion; only that cradle received a child reborn and suckled elsewhere, namely, in Airyanam Vaego (the true "seed of the Aryas," who were then all that was noble and true) which place is identical with the *Shamballah* of the Hindus and the Arhats, a place now regarded also as mythical. In *Fargard II* Ahura Mazda calls together "a meeting of the celestial gods," and, Yima, the first man "of the excellent mortals," in the Airyanam Vaego - "*in the far-off lands of the rising sun*," says the *Book of Numbers* of the Chaldees, written on the Euphrates. Those of the Parsees who have ears, let them hear, and - draw their inferences; and perchance it may be also found that the Brahmans who came from the North to India bringing with them all the learning of secret wisdom, came from a place still more northward than Lake Mansarovar."

HPB: "The origin of the Brahmans and Magi in the night of time is one, the secret doctrine teaches us. First, they were a hierarchy of adepts, of men profoundly versed in physical and spiritual sciences and occult knowledge, of various nationalities, all celibates, and enlarging their numbers by the transmission of their knowledge to voluntary neophytes. Then when their numbers became too large to be contained in the "Airyanam Vaego," the adepts scattered far and wide, and we can trace them establishing other hierarchies on the model of the first in every part of the globe."

HPB: "Indeed, Bunsen places Zoroaster in Baktria and the emigration of the Baktrians to the Indus at 3,784 B.C. And this Zoroaster taught, not what he had learned "from," but with, the Brahmans, *i.e.*, at Airyanam Vaego, since what is identical with Brahmanical symbology is found but in the earlier *Vedas*, not in any of the later Commentaries, that it may be even said of the *Vedas* themselves, that though compiled in the land of the Seven Rivers, they existed ages before in the north."

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HPB: "If we had to describe broadly the origin of this religion from the standpoint, and upon the authority of the Occult teachings, we would call it by its original, primitive name, that of Magianism. Locating its first development in those vast regions which would have to be described as the whole area between the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Okhotsk in its length, and that which stretches through the unexplored deserts between the Altai and the Himalayan mountains in its breadth, we would place it back at an epoch, undreamt of by modern science and, therefore, rejected by all but the most speculative and daring anthropologists.

"We have no right to give out in this journal the correct number of years, or rather of ages upon ages, since - according to the doctrines of the Secret Science - the first seeds of Magianism were sown by the hand of the BEING to whose duty it falls to rear, nurse and guide the tottering steps of the renascent human races that awake anew to life on every planet in its turn, after its periodical "obscuration." It goes as far back as the days of our local *Manvantara*, so that the seeds sown among the first "root-race" began sprouting in its infant brain, grew up, and commencing to bear fruit toward the latter part of the second race, developed fully during the third into what is known among Occultists as the "Tree of Knowledge" and the "Tree of Life" - the real meaning of both having been, later on, so sadly disfigured and misinterpreted by both Zoroastrians and Christians."

BPW: "Now, Occult Records claim to have the correct dates of each of the 13 Zoroasters. According to the said Records, Zoroastrianism as a distinct religio-philosophic school is of early Atlantean origin, *i.e.*, before spiritual sinfulness overtook that race."

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HPB: "The *Zend-Avesta* represents now only the general system, the dead letter, so to say, of the dictates of Zoroaster. . . . As well expressed by Darmesteter, the Parsee "sacred books are the ruins of a religion." . . . the *Avesta* of modern Parseeism, with its numberless interpolations and arbitrary commentaries . . . the [original] Zend text is simply a secret *code* of certain words and expressions agreed upon by the original compilers, and the key to which is but with the Initiates. The Western scholars may say, "The key to the *Avesta* is not the Pahlavi, but the *Vedas*"; but the Occultist's answer is, "Aye; but the key to the *Vedas* is the Secret Doctrine." The former assert correctly enough that "the *Vedas* come from the same source as the *Avesta*"; the students of Occultism ask: "Do you know even the A B C of that source?"

HPB: "For the Sacred Books of the Mazdeans, as all the other sacred Scriptures of the East (the Bible included), have to be read esoterically. The Mazdeans had practically two religions, as almost all the other ancient nations - one for the people and the other for the initiated priests. . . . the whole meaning of which can be obtained only by the *study* of occult philosophy."

BPW: "Originally the *Vendidad* was pre-eminently an Occult treatise; it has passed through innumerable vicissitudes and distortions during these thousands of years, as through scores of editions in the course of the evolution of languages; in its present form it is but a fragment, and a patched-up one at that - put together mostly from memory and surviving documents, some

of doubtful authenticity from the occult point of view, after the exploits of the vandal Iskander, whom the West knows as Alexander and calls "Great"! . . . The original treatises - codes of law like *Vendidad*, or hymns like the five *Gathas*, or litanies like the *Yasna* - are almost all extinct. The sparse fragments we now possess are worse than fragmentary, for interpolations have taken place. All the same they are full of high philosophy, noble ethics, and not altogether devoid of Occult lore and esoteric teachings, though they are rightly called "the ruins of a religion." The extant Zoroastrian texts and documents will not be appreciated till all this is kept in mind. What we now possess is the residue of centuries of trials and tribulations through which Iranian Culture came to birth, culminated, declined and from all appearances is becoming extinct - this last is one phase of the communal Karma which the modern Parsis, only some 95,000 strong, are facing today."

HPB: "It is very likely, as Darmesteter thinks, that "Herodotus may have heard the Magi sing, in the fifth century B.C. the very same gathas which are sung nowadays by the Mobeds in Bombay," but it is most unlikely that, sung as they are now, they are anything better than the "shells" of the old gathas, the animating spirit having fled from them, never to return unless forcibly recalled by the resurrecting potentiality of the "Occult Sciences.""

BPW: "Rich in metaphor, profusely symbolic, but to the student of Theosophy and esotericism very clear, are all the Avesta fragments. There is enough of the ancient Wisdom extant in them to make them more than interesting; they provide important proofs of the existence of the Universal Wisdom Religion from which all religions and philosophies sprang."

HPB: "The subject is of tremendous interest to every thinking Parsee, but he has *to help himself* if he would learn more. His religion is not dead yet; and under the lifeless mask of modern Zoroastrianism the pulse of the Magi of old still beats. We have endeavoured as briefly as possible to give a correct, though a very superficial, view of the purport and spirit of true Magianism. There is not a sentence in this for which authority cannot be shown."

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BPW: "If the spirit of Vedanta singing through the *Gita* endeavours to bring the world to *Dharma-Duty*, the theme which Zoroastrianism recites for humanity is of *Ashoi-Purity*. The very words with which Ahuramazda rejoiced Zoroaster as given in the *Vendidad* (V. 21) are: "For man purity is the greatest good even from his birth." This code of purity contains an exhortation profound in its simplicity (IX. 19).

"Make thyself pure, O righteous man! Anyone in the world here below can win purity for himself, namely when he cleanses himself with good thoughts, words and deeds."

"The first, the shortest, but regarded as the most efficacious of prayers is *Ashem-Vohu*, which translated is:

"Purity is the noblest blessing. Happiness it is - happiness to him who is pure for the sake of noblest purity itself." . . .

"This Law of Ahuramazda is clear to the wise and the discriminating who by its aid acquire the power of righteous thought and deed and obtain control over the tongue (*Yasna XXXI. 19 and 22*). *Manasni - Gavasni - Kunasni - Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds*, according to the righteous law of Ahura is reiterated in numerous places in the Avesta. It is insisted that man should consult the righteous Law of Wisdom. His own good inclinations or noble aspirations are not sufficient; his mental and verbal expressions and especially his deeds should be in conformity with the Code of Wisdom."