

ASIATIC PAPERS

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BY

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We learn from this passage, that the ancient Persians believed in the existence of five spiritual parts in a man. On the death of a man, his body (*tanu*) remains in this world, and the five spiritual faculties go to the spiritual world. These five faculties are as follow:— (1) Anghu, *i. e.*, life or vitality; (2) Daêna, *i. e.*, conscience or the inherent power, which reminds him to do good and shun evil; (3) Baôdhangh, *i. e.*, intellectual faculty; (4) Urvâna, *i. e.*, soul which has the freedom to choose good and evil; and (5) Fravashi, *i. e.*, the guiding spirit.

We will examine, how far some of the Avesta spiritual constituents of the soul agree with the Egyptian constituents.

1. The first of the component parts of a man's soul, according to the Egyptians, was Ka. It corresponds to the Fravashi (Farôhar) of the Avesta in several ways.

(a) The Egyptian Ka was imagined to be "similar to a man and yet not a man." According to the ancient Persians, the Fravashi of a person is the exact prototype of that person and yet not that person himself. On the ruins of the Achemenian palaces, we see pictures of kings worshipping God. Opposite to them and a little above, hovering in the air, we see winged figures which are the exact prototypes of the worshipping monarchs. These figures are the Fravashis of the monarchs. They are similar to the monarchs but not the monarchs themselves.

(b) The Ka "was believed to be an indispensable constituent of every being which had life, Kas being ascribed to the gods themselves."¹ This is true of the Fravashis as well. According to the Fravardin Yasht we have the Fravashis of all living beings. Even the Yazatas, *i. e.*, the angels, the Ameshaspentas, *i. e.*, the archangels, and Ahura Mazda, the Lord himself, have their Fravashis. (Yaçna XXIII.—2)

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"I invoke with praise the Fravashis of Ahura Mazda and the Ameshaspentas, together with all the holy Fravashis of the heavenly Yazatas."

¹ Wiedemann, p. 242.

(c) Again, with respect to Ka the Egyptians believed, that man "included a second self able to pass through walls or barriers bound neither by time nor space, and which might exist for thousands of years."¹ This is true, to a certain extent, of the Fravashi of the Avesta. The Fravashi of a man existed thousands of years after his death. Not only that, but it existed long before his birth. The birth of a man is not a new event in the history of creation. His Fravashi was created by God with the creation of the world. It existed somewhere in the universe, helping in the work of creation. With the birth of the man, it came into existence in this world, and after his death, it still existed somewhere in the universe; and irrespective of time and space, it came to this world, when piously invoked by the living.

(d) "The Ka, which had been the companion of the body in life, at death attained to independent existence. It was to the Ka that funeral prayers and offerings were made."² This is true of the Fravashi of the Avesta. In the Fravardin Yasht, wherein the departed worthies of ancient Irân are remembered, it is their Fravashis or Farôhârs that are invoked, and not their *ravâns* or souls in simple entity. It is in honour of the Fravashis, that the funeral prayers and offerings are made.

2. Âb, or heart, was the second of the immortal parts of an Egyptian's soul. According to Wiedemann, "a distinct doctrine was gradually formulated as to the part played by the heart in the next world and how it was to be recovered by its owner. This taught, that after death the heart led an independent existence, journeying alone through the Underworld until it met the deceased in the Hall of Judgment."

From this description, it appears, that the Egyptian Âb corresponds to the Daêna or conscience of the Avesta³ in several ways. (a) Just as the Egyptian Âb journeys alone and meets the deceased in the Hall of Judgment, so we find from the Avesta and Pahlavi books, that Daêna, after being separated at death, meets the deceased again on the third day after death in the Judgment Hall before Meher Dâvar, i. e., Meher the Judge.

If the deceased has led a good and virtuous life, his Daêna or conscience appears before him in the form of a handsome maiden. We read in the Vishtâsp Yasht (Yt. XXIV.—56):

¹ Wiedemann, p. 240.

² Wiedemann, p. 241.

³ The Pahlavi equivalents of Daêna are *kunashnê* or *kerdâr*, i. e., deeds.

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“ It appears to him, as if, in that (wind) comes his own Daêna (conscience), in the form of a maiden, that is handsome, beautiful, white-armed, brave, well-formed, tall, with large breasts and well-formed body, well-born, of noble descent, of fifteen years of age, as beautiful in the growth of her body as the most beautiful object in creation.”

The Hâdôkht Nask (II., 22-23) and Virâf-nâmeh (IV., 18-20) give similar passages. The Minokherad says the same thing about the Kunashnê (𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎) of a deceased person (II., 125). Here Kunashnê is the Pahlavi-equivalent of the Avesta Daêna, and means one's deed, or actions.

The Vendidâd (XIX., 29-30) also gives a similar passage, but the word there used is Baodhangh, which, though one of the immorta constituents of the soul, is, according to the Avesta, a little different from Daêna. The Vendidâd seems to use it as an equivalent of Daêna

Again, if the deceased has led a bad and vicious life, his Daêna appears before him in the form of a hideous ugly woman. We read in Virâf-nâmeh (XVII., 12 Hoshangji and Haug's Text p. 46).

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“ He saw in that wind his own conscience and deeds (in the form of) a woman, loose, dirty, polluted, furious, with bent knees, back-

hipped, so endlessly spotted that one spot over-reached another spot as if she were a polluted, dirty, stinking, noxious animal."

The Minokherad also says that in the case of a vicious man, his conscience appears before him in the form of an unmaidenly maiden (II., 167 Foster Dârâb's Text p. 14). (وینوارن وک وینوارن لک)

(وینوارن لک)

This is what is termed a "noble allegory" by Dr. Cheyne, who thinks, that "at any rate, this Zoroastrian allegory suggested the Talmudic story of the three bards of ministering angels who meet the soul of the pious man, and the three bards of wounding angels who meet the bad man when he dies." (The Bampton Lectures.—The Origin of the Psalter (1891), p. 437.)

(b) Again, the belief of the Egyptians, about this Âb (Heart), was, that "it is not the heart which sins, but only its fleshly envelope. The heart was and still remained pure and in the Underworld accused its earthly covering of any impurities contracted. Only if the latter was pure did it return to its place; otherwise it probably dwelt in a place set apart as the Abode of Hearts and so devoted its former possessor to destruction."

Well nigh similar is the case with the Daêna, or conscience of the Avesta. When it appears before the deceased, in the form of a woman, on the third day after death, at the time of his being judged by Mehêr the Judge, she gives credit to the deceased for her being comely and handsome or accuses him for her being ugly and irksome, according as the man is virtuous or vicious.

In the case of a virtuous man, his Daêna (conscience), appearing in the form of a beautiful damsel, praises the good actions of the deceased, or, as the Egyptians said, gives evidence in favour of the deceased and gives to him all the credit for her being handsome. She says, "I am thy good thoughts, good words and good deeds . . . thou hast made me more lovely, more beautiful, more desirable, &c." (Hâdôkt Nask II., 25-30). In the same way, in the case of a vicious man, his Daêna or conscience, appearing before him in the form of an ugly woman, accuses him of having made her ugly and filthy. She says, "Oh man of evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds! I am thy bad deeds. It is on account of thy desire and deeds that I am ugly and hideous, &c." (Virâf-Nâmeh XVII., 14, 15).

¹ Wiedemann, p. 287.

According to the Egyptians, the deceased went before Osiris to be judged for his past actions.¹ According to the Avesta, it is before Mithra or Mehêr, that the souls of the deceased appear to be judged.

(a) It is said that an ancient name of Osiris was Hysiris, which meant 'many-eyed.' In the same way, according to the Avesta, Mithra was called Baêvarê-Chashmana, *i. e.*, "a thousand-eyed."

(b) Again, Osiris was considered to be a Divinity of the Sun;² so was Mithra acknowledged to be the angel presiding over Light. Mithra is always associated with Hvarê-khshaêtâ or Khorshed, *i. e.*, the Sun.

(c) Osiris holds a sceptre and a flail which is a club-like instrument, as symbols of his power.³ Mithra also has his 'vazra,' *i. e.*, mace, or club, as a symbol of authority to be struck over "the heads of vicious persons" (Kamêrêdha paitî daêvanâm, Khorshed Nyâish, 15).

(d) As Osiris has a weighing scale before him to weigh the good and the bad actions of a person,⁴ so has Mithra one (*tardzinitârih*) before him (Minôkherad II., 119).

(e) Both, among the Egyptians and the ancient Persians, the souls of the deceased are led before the presiding judge by some god or angel. Among the Egyptians, it is Anubis, that leads them before Osiris, and among the ancient Persians, it is Sraosh, Râm and Beharâm, that lead them before Mithra (Minokherad II., 115).

(f) Osiris is helped in his work of Judgment by some other gods. So is Mithra helped by some other Yazatas, *i. e.*, angels (Virâf, V., 5).

It is Anubis that is in charge of the weighing scales among the Egyptians. It is Rashnê that holds this office among the Persians, (Virâf, V., 5.)

It is Horus among the Egyptians, that superintends the work of weighing. It is Âstâd among the Persians, that does the similar work. As the Horus of the Egyptians is a god of truth, so the Âstâd, of the Persians, is an angel of justice and truth.

Among the Egyptians, Thoth acts as a scribe of the gods and sets down the result of the proceedings. Among the Persians, Mithra⁵

¹ Wiedemann, p. 217.

² Wiedemann, p. 215.

³ Wiedemann, p. 217, 248.

⁴ P. 248.

⁵ The names of the Zoroastrian angels taking a part in the work of judgment, suggest another of comparison between the ancient Egyptians

himself is an account-taker. *nyôkhsh hamârgar*
 (Dadistan-i-Dini XIV., 3).

2. In both the nations, the souls of the deceased go into the Higher world repeating some words expressive of their feeling. According to the Egyptians, the deceased, while entering the Judgment Hall¹ said :

“Hail to you, ye lords of the Two Truths ! Hail to the Great God Lord of the Two Truths I bring unto you Truth, I destroy the Evil for you.”

Compare with these, the words of a pious soul among the Zoroastrians. *Ushtâ ahmâi yahmâi ushtâ-kahmâi-chit, i. e.,* “Hail to him who (brings) happiness to others.” (Yaçna XLIII., 1.)

III.

Both the nations believed in Resurrection. As Pettigrew says :. “Believing in the immortality of the soul, the ancient Egyptians conceived that they were retaining the soul within the body as long as the form of the body could be preserved entire, or were facilitating the reunion of it with the body, at the day of resurrection, by preserving the body from corruption.”

Thus we see that one of the two objects, and the principal object, of the Egyptians, in preserving their bodies entire, as mummies, was to provide for the resurrection. They embalmed and preserved not only

 and Zoroastrians. According to both, the days of the month and the months are assigned to some gods or angels.

According to Herodotus (II., 82 Bary’s translation (1889) p. 125), “each month and day is assigned to some particular god” among the Egyptians. We find the same among the Zoroastrians. All the 30 days of a Parsee month and all the 12 months of a Parsee year are named after particular ‘yazatas’ or angels.

The Egyptians intercalated five whole days at the end of the three hundred and sixty days of the Egyptian year. As Dr. Wiedemann says, “The old Egyptian year consisted of twelve months of thirty days each, and in order to bring this into closer conformity with the true year there were added to it the so-called Epagomenal days, which even at an early period were celebrated in certain temples as those on which the five gods of the Osirian cycle were born” (p. 21).

The Zoroastrians have a similar intercalation of the year, and even now the last five days of the year so added, known as the ‘gâthâ’ days, are celebrated in the temples as the most sacred of the Parsee holidays. They are named after the five ‘gâthâs’ or sacred hymns, in honour of God and His Realm written by Zoroaster himself.

¹ A History of Egyptian Mummies, by Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, p. 13.

the body, which they called Kha (or Xa), but also the intestines, the heart, lungs and liver.¹ These four internal organs were, as it were, given at the time of burial in the charge of four gods to be preserved entire, and to be reproduced at the time of resurrection.

Now, the ancient Persians also believed in Resurrection, but they did not think it necessary to preserve the dead bodies entire for that purpose. At first, they thought, that the preservation of the bones was sufficient for the purpose of resurrection. One Saoshyant, who will appear at the end of this cycle, will raise the dead from their bones (Ast). He was called Astvat-ereta, *i. e.*, one, who makes the possessors of bones rise up. Hence arose, at one time, in ancient Persia the custom of preserving the bones (Ast. *आस्थि* L. *os* *اسخوان* in Astodâns or Ossuaries.²)

Latterly, the necessity of preserving bones in separate *Astodâns* (receptacles of bones) or ossuaries was, gradually done away with, and we find that the Bundeshesh gives a more rational way of dealing with the ancient belief of raising the dead from the bones. It says, that when God will resuscitate this world and raise the dead, he would do so from the material of this earth, to which the different material components of a man's body are entrusted. It says that at the time of the resurrection, when the dead will be made to rise again, their bones will be claimed from the earth, where they have been reduced to the state of dust, their blood from water, their hair from trees and their life from fire (S. B. E. V. West Chap. XXX., 6).

IV.

Now rises the question, How shall we account for the above points of marked similarity between the beliefs of these two ancient nations, the Egyptians and the Persians?

The answer is, that both these nations had their homes in Central Asia. The ancient Egyptians were Asiatics by origin and not Africans.

Wilkinson³ says :—“ Every one who considers the features, the language and other peculiarities of the ancient Egyptians, will feel convinced that they are not of African extraction, but

¹ Wiedemann, p. 234-35.

² *Vide* my paper on “ A Persian Coffin said to be 3,000 years old sent to the Museum of the Society by Mr. Malcolm of Bushire,” in the Journal of the Anthropological Society, Vol. I., No. 7.

³ Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, by J. G. Wilkinson, Vol. I., p. 3.

that they bear the evident stamp of an Asiatic origin And if features and other external appearances are insufficient to establish this fact, the formation of the skull, which is decidedly of the Caucasian variety, must remove all doubts of their valley having been peopled from the East There has always been a striking resemblance between the Egyptians and Asiatics, both as to their manners, customs, language and religion ; and some authors have considered the valley they inhabited to belong to Asia rather than to Africa. . . . In manner, language, and many other respects, Egypt was certainly more Asiatic than African. It is not improbable that those two nations (the Hindus and Egyptians) may have proceeded from the same original stock and have migrated southwards from their parent country in Central Asia."

Not only were they foreigners to a certain extent in Africa, but in their adopted country of Egypt itself, they, as Dr. Wiedemann says, "did not exclude foreign deities from their pantheon. They never questioned the divinity of the gods of the races with which they came in contact, but accepted it in each case as an established fact. To them, an exceptionally powerful nation was in itself a proof of that nation's possession of an exceptionally mighty god, whom the dwellers in the Valley of the Nile were, therefore, eager to receive into the ranks of Egyptian deities, that they might gain his protection for themselves by means of prayers and offerings and at the same time alienate his affection from his native land."¹

Among the deities of the Asiatic origin, so adopted, was one Astarte which was the Ardvicura Anâhita of the ancient Persians, the Anâitis of the Romans.

¹ Wiedemann, p. 148.