

Some Prayer-gestures of the Babylonians and Assyrians. Their Parallels among the ancient Iranians and modern Parsees.

Read on 3rd December 1920.

The subject of this paper has been suggested to me by an interesting and instructive paper in the Introduction. October 1919 issue of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London (Art. XVI), entitled, "Gesture in Sumerian and Babylonian Prayer: A study in Babylonian and Assyrian Archæology" and written by Dr. S. Langdon, Professor of Assyrology at Oxford. When I was reading Dr. Langdon's paper, I happened to stay at Khandala, in the beautiful bungalow on the Elphinstone point belonging to Mr. Rustamjee Byramjee Jeebhoy, in the compound of which there is a monolith, which has on its four sides a number of partly defaced and destroyed figures with different gestures and postures of hands.¹ Among these gestures, some hand postures suggest that some

¹ The Bombay Gazetteer of Poona thus speaks of the monolith: "Near the west wall of the garden of Mr. Bairamji's house is a pillar about a foot square and four feet high covered with rich much worn carving. Among the figures are more than one small seated images. The pillar is said to have been brought from near the reversing station by a Mr. Adam, who was employed in making the Railway" (Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Vol. XVIII, Part III, Poona, page 237, n. 1.)

My information gathered from Mr. Pestonji Nusservanji Wadia, who, as the Private Secretary of the late first Mr. Byramjee Jeebhoy, had been off and on visiting the bungalow since about 1870, was, that the monolith belonged to a temple on the fort on the hill of Rāj-māchi, which one sees from the Railway train during a great part of the Bore Ghaut ascent from Karjat to Khandala, and which is situated at the distance of about 10 miles from Khandala. Some curiosity to know whether the monolith belonged to that temple led me to visit the fort and the temple on 30th May of this year. The fort has a fatiguing ascent and the temple—the temple of Bhairav—is a ruin. At present, it is more a dilapidated hut than a *pucca* structure. From what I observed there, I am inclined to think, that the Bombay Gazetteer's statement, that the monolith was brought at the Bungalow from a site at the Reversing Station, is not correct, and that it is likely, that it belonged to the temple at Rāj-māchi. I got excavated from the rubbish round the temple hut, the ruin of another monolith, which, however had some figures on only one side, similar to those on the monolith at Khandala. This much is certain, that the monolith must have belonged to a temple or a place of worship of some structural importance. But we do not find near the Reversing Station any ruins of a temple to which the monolith may have belonged.

The monolith is said to have been brought to the bungalow by Mr. S. Adamson, a Contractor who built the Bore Ghaut Railway. He had built the bungalow for his residence for several years during which the Ghaut was built. I found his name in small letters on three pieces of the furniture of the bungalow which passed from his hands through one or two purchasers to the hands of the late Mr. Byramjee. The name "Adam", as given by the Gazetteer, is evidently a mistake for Adamson.

I beg to draw the attention of our Archæological Department to the monolith for study. A paper by some Hindu scholar on all the prayer-gestures, whether of hands or otherwise, will be very welcome to students of Prayer-attitudes.

of the figures are of persons who are praying. Two figures present a pose of the hands placed on the lap, which we see in many figures of Budha and Indian deities. I am sorry, I have not been able to produce a cast of these figures, but I produce for inspection a very rough sketch of them taken by an unskilled hand. The gestures of the figures on this monolith led me to think further on the subject of Dr. Langdon's paper and to study the question of prayer-gestures of the ancient Iranians and modern Parsees.

While speaking of gestures referred to in the Bible, Mr. W. Ewing¹ says, that "The Oriental is a natural expert in appropriate and expressive gesture. To his impulsive and immotional temperament, attitude and action form a more apt vehicle for thought and feeling than even speech.....Conversation is, accompanied by a sort of running commentary of gestures." The object of this paper is to treat the question of gestures among the ancient Iranians, not all gestures but only those which present some parallelism with those referred to by Dr. Langdon as prevailing in Sumeria, Assyria or Babylonia.

Dr. Langdon says "Religious worship is abundantly illustrated in many of its most important aspects by scenes engraved on Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian seal cylinders. Chronologically, the seals of this region illustrate nearly every period of the long history of these peoples and the changing rituals and beliefs of their religion. A very large proportion of the seals represent the owner of the seal approaching a deity in the attitude of prayer.....The engravers of cylinders in all periods probably kept in stock seals engraved with the scene of the private prayer as the custom imposed in their periods. The human who is figured standing before a god, or in Assyria more frequently before a divine symbol, is not a portrait of the owner of the seal. The owner regards himself rather as represented and symbolized by the conventional figure. In those cases in which the engraver produced a seal cylinder at the command of a Sumerian or Babylonian, perhaps, we may regard the praying figure as an approximate portrait."² Dr. Langdon then refers to "the various attitudes of the worshipper's hands in the different periods," and compares "these attitudes with those which characterise the worship of adjacent peoples."³ Among the adjacent peoples, Dr. Langdon does not refer to the ancient Iranians who were Zoroastrians by faith. This is, perhaps, because, what can be called authentic history shows that the ancient Iranians at the



¹ Dictionary of the Bible by Rev. Hastings.

² J. R. A. S. October 1919, p. 531.

³ Ibid p. 533.

time of their highest glory were the successors of the Babylonians and Assyrians and not their contemporaries. Sir W. Jones, though he identified the earlier Iranians of the Peshdadian dynasty with the Assyrians, thought, "that the annals of the Peshdad or Assyrian race may be considered dark and fabulous; those of the Kaiani family as heroic and poetical; and those of the Sassanian kings as historical." However, we know from some authentic sources, that the ancient Iranians had, in the early career of their history, come into contact with the Babylonians and Assyrians.

The very name Babylon can be traced to the Avesta. Babylon,

B a b y l o n, the Bawri of the Avesta. Its founder Baêvar (asp). is the Bawri  of the Avesta (Yt. V., 29), Babyrus of the Cuneiform inscriptions (Behistin Inscription I, 6) and Babil  of the Persian writers. Philologically, the ancient Iranian name Bawri, can easily become at first Babyl and then Babylon. The letter 'w' of Bawri can easily change place with "b," both letters being of the same *Sthâna*. So, Avesta Bawri, would become Babri. Then 'r' can easily be read 'l.' So Babri would become Babli, which then became Babil. The last part 'on' is a later Greek addition, as we find in the case of Macedon, Chalcedon, etc.

I think that the city has taken its name from its original founder. Who was the founder? The Avesta connects Bawri with one Azi-Dahâka, who is said to have offered at Bawri a great sacrifice of 100 horses, 1,000 oxen and 10,000 lambs or goats. This name Azi Dahâka was latterly contracted into Dahâka, the first part Azi being dropped. We have several such cases of parts of an old name being dropped; for example, in the Avesta name Takhma-urupa, the latter part 'urupa' is dropped in the Farvardin Yasht, and we find the name simply as Takhma, a form which has latterly given us the later Iranian name Tahma-tan (another name of Rustam) and Tehe-minâ (the name of the wife of Rustam). In the same way, we find that the Avesta name Yima Khshaeta, which has given us the later name Jamshed, has been contracted into Yima (Jam in the Afrin i Hept Ameshâspand). Here, in the case of the name Azi-Dahâka, it is the first part, Azi, that is dropped and the name was contracted into Dahâk, which soon became, without any philological difficulty, Zohâk, a name with which Sir Walter Scott has familiarized his readers of the novel of Talisman.

Now, the extent Avesta connects this Azi Dahâka or Zohâk with Bawri in the matter of a sacrifice and says nothing

more, but the Pahlavi Bundelesh¹ says, that this Azi Dahâka or Zohak built a palace in Babylon which was known as Kulang Dushit, which is the Kvirinta Duzhita of the Avesta (Yt XV 19), Kulen Dis of Hamza Isphahâni, Gang-i Diz hukht of Firdousi² (Mohl I p. 96). These references show that Bawri or Babylon, was not only the seat of Zohak's great sacrifice but was also founded by him. Maçoudi attributes the foundation of Babylon to Nimrod.³ But, as pointed out by Malcolm, oriental writers identify this Nimrod with Zohâk. Ebn Haukal⁴ and Edrisi⁵ also attribute the foundation of Babylon to Zohak.

The Pahlavi Shatroihâ i Airân says, that Bawri was founded in the reign of Jamshed. "He (the founder of the city) fixed there (the direction of) the planet mercury. By the situation of the city or its building, he pointed out magically the 7 planets, the 12 constellations and signs of the Zodiac and the eight parts (of the heavens) towards the sun and other planets." Now Zohâk lived in the time of Jamshid. In fact, Jamshid, the Iranian was overthrown by Zohâk the Babylonian. So, this statement of this Pahlavi treatise also indirectly supports the fact that Zohâk was the founder of Babylon.

The above statement of this book that Zohak founded the city on some astronomical principles, or to speak generally, attending to some principles of orientation, is supported by Maçoudi, who connects with Nimrod (who is identified by some with Zohâk) the cult of fire and stars.⁶ Now, the Bundelesh⁷ and the Shâh-nâmeh⁸ say, that this Azi-Dahâka or Zohâk was known as Baêvar-asp. The Pazend Afrin-i Haft Amsh-âspand (s. 8) also points to this identification. Zohâk was called Baêvar-asp, because he was the possessor of 10,000 (baêvar) horses (asp). I think then, that the city Bawri, the original form of the later name Bâbil (Babylon), derived its name from its founder Baêvar-asp, which was another name of Azi Dahâka or Zohak. The second part of the name "asp" was dropped, as it often happens and as seen above in the case of other proper names. I have gone rather deep into this subject in order to show, on the authority of old Parsee books and of the works of Arab authors, that the ancient Iranians had come into contact with the Babylonians under Zohâk. I must admit,

1 Darmesteter. Le Zend Avesta II p. 584. Études Iraniennes II pp. 210-213. Vide the Photo-zinc Text published by the Parsee Panchayat and edited by Mr. Behram-gore Tehemuras Anklesaria.

2 Vide my Dictionary of Avestaic Proper names p. 63.

3 Maçoudi, par Barbier de Meynard. I p. 78. 4 Ousley's Oriental Geography p. 70.

5 Edrisi par Jaubert II pp. 160-61. 6 Maçoudi par B-de Meynard I. p. 82.

7 Chap. XXIX, 9 S. B. E Vol. V. p. 119. 8 Mohl I p. 57.

that herein we go to, what are known as, pre-historic times, but, anyhow, we find that there was some connection. So, if you once expect some such connection, one may expect to find, at least some parallels between the prayer gestures and attitudes of the Iranians and those of the Babylonians and Assyrians. I propose dealing in this Paper with some of these prayer gestures and attitudes. In fact, my paper may be taken as one continuing the study of the prayer gestures and attitudes of the Babylonians and Assyrians to times subsequent to the periods to which Dr. Langdon refers. In the ordinary course, I would have preferred to read this Paper before my Anthropological Society of Bombay, but, as Dr. Langdon's Paper is published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, I beg to submit mine before the Bombay Branch of the Society.

Let us first of all examine some poses of hand referred to in the Avesta. The Avesta word for hand is Zasta 𐬰𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 (Pahl-hasta. Sans. *hasta* (हस्त) Pers. *dast* (دست) Ger. hand). The Avesta has generally two words, one for good persons and another for bad persons. Thus, Zasta is the hand of good persons and gava (𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 Gr. *quion*) for that of bad persons.¹

The prayer-pose of the hands is ustāna-zasta 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬰𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 i.e., stretched fourth or uplifted² (from *us* or *uz* 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 Pahl. 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 Pers. 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 sans. उद्, Ger. aus. Lat. ex. out). We find frequent references to hands, holding offerings in prayers. For example, *aesmozasta*, i.e., holding the fire-wood in the hand³ (Yaçna, LXII¹), *gao-zasta*, i.e., holding some cow-productions

1 For similar instances, we have pādha (Sans. पाद्, Per. pāe پاڼي Lat. *pedes* pes. Fr. pied. Ger. fuss. Eng. foot) for the foot of good men and zbaretha (𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) and dvarethra (𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) for that of bad men. Vagdhana (𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) for the head of good men and kamrēdha (𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) for that of bad men.

2 The holding up of the hands was a prayer gesture of the Hebrews also: "When Moses held up his hand Israel prevailed" (Exodus XVII, 11).

3 The three Magis or the Wisemen of the East are said to have carried incense (labanum 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) in their hands as an offering to the infant Jesus.

like milk in the hand ; *barêsmo zasta*, *i.e.*, holding the twigs of the sacred barsam in the hand ; *hâvano-zasta*, *i.e.*, holding in the hand the *hâvanîm* or the mortar for pounding the Haoma ; *gaomata-zasta*, *i.e.*, holding a bovine production in the hand. As the hand played an important part in prayer-gestures, a con-

tract made by a pressing of hands (𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀)

was held to be very sacred. ¹ Hand, being an useful organ of the body and being used in prayer-gestures, a valuable contract was spoken of as *zasta maso*, *i.e.*, of the value of the hand.

Dr. Langdon first refers to the attitude of the worshipper's hands in the early period of Sumerian glyptique, commonly known as pre-Sargonic, which period had the so-called processional scenes on the seals. So, let us see at first, what have the Iranian materials, the writings, sculptures, etc., to say on the subject of processions. I think, we find the germ of such processional scenes in the Avesta. In the Vendidad (Chap. II, 21), Ahura Mazda himself is represented as proceeding to the *vara*, or colony—the Airyana Vaêja, the Irân Vej, the cradle of the Aryas—newly founded by Yima (Jamshed), with his Yazatas or angels in some thing like a procession. Yima also, in return, proceeds to meet Ahura Mazda in the same way. In the processional entry of Ahura Mazda in Iran a number of invisible Yazatas or angels who can only be conceived in mind (*mainyaoibyô yazataëibyô*) accompanied him, Ahura Mazda proceeded with them, as if it were, to inaugurate a house-warming or rather a city-warming ceremony. Yima proceeded to welcome Ahura Mazda and his host of Yazatas, in the company of the best men (*vahishtaëibyô mashyâkaëibyô*) of Iran. The Avestaic word *Hanjaman* (Pers. *Anjuman*) used in this connection is the same as Sanskrit *sangama* used for the groups, in which, in India, pilgrims march in processional order when visiting known places of pilgrimage.

Coming to Iranian sculptures, we have no parallels of processions going to seated deities, but we have those of processions going to seated kings. For example, we have two such processional scenes in the ruins of the City of Sapur (Kiash's Ancient Persian Sculptures, Plates 4 and 6). Mr. Kiash thinks, that the first is that of Behram II and the second that of Khusro Parvez (Chosroes II). Some writers think the second to be that of Shapur I. Coming to modern times, we find that the idea of a religious procession still survives.

¹ Cf. Genesis XIV, 22, wherein a holy vow was taken by holding the hand unto the Lord.

(a) We see it in the initiation ceremony of Nâvar, wherein the initiate or candidate for priesthood is conducted to a temple by the head priest accompanied by other priests and laymen and even ladies.

(b) Again upto a few years ago, at Naosari, on the occasions of the Gâhambârs (season festivals), a procession headed by the head priest (Dastur) and other elders (Desâis) went on a previous day to the place where the communal feast was to take place the next day. There, the head priest and the elders with their own hands threw in a cooking pot a few spices (२५१२) etc., to be cooked for the meal for the next day. They placed sandal wood and frank incense on the fire preparing the food and said the prayer of Tan-darusti (Benediction) invoking God's blessings on the whole community.

(c) Marriage processions, though dying out generally in a great crowded city like Bombay, where the parents of the bridegrooms and brides have not sufficient accommodation at their own places for the marriage ritual and its preliminaries, social and religious, and where, consequently there are common gathering places like the Allbless Baug, the Cama Baug, etc., do not still seem to have lost their preliminary signification. The principle marriage procession in early days was that in which the bridegroom went to the house of the bride to be married and to fetch the bride to her new home. Nowadays, though both the parents of the bride and the bridegroom meet in a common communal place, there generally still remains the travesty or the show of the bridegroom going out in the company of the officiating priests and the ladies of his family, from one gate of the gathering-place and returning by the other.

(d) The next instance of a religious procession still extant, is that of the funeral procession, wherein the mourners, headed by priests, at least by two priests, follow the bier in pairs of two, reciting a prayer. The presence of priests in all these processions still preserves the religious character of the processions.

As in the Babylonian Archæology, so, in the Iranian Archæology, there arises the question, as to who

The praying figures in the Babylonian and Iranian Archæology. the praying figures are. Whom do the praying figures on the Babylonian seals represent? Whom do the praying figures in the Iranian sculptures represent? As to Babylonia, Dr. Langdon says: "The praying figures on seals actually represent the owners. Of that we can no longer doubt. Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians carried about on their seals representatives of themselves as they said their

prayers before one of the great gods. These were supported from the neck by a stout cord which passed through an aperture at the axis of the cylinder¹” We have a parallel of this in some Iranian sculptures, which determine, that the praying figures represent the owners. For example, take the sculpture of the Naksh-i Darius in the sculptures on the mountain of Besitoun or Behistoun. There, we see on the top a winged flying figure in the air, holding forth the hand for prayer. The sculpture bears the well-known inscription which bears the name of Darius, thus showing that the praying figure is that of King Darius himself (*vide* for the sculpture, Kavasji Dinsha. Kiash’s Ancient Persian Sculpture, p. 185, Plate 55).

From the fact, that the sculpture bears the owner’s name (the name of Darius), we can safely infer, that similar portraits of winged flying figures in other parts of Persia are the portraits of the kings or noble men who engraved them. We have a similar figure at Persipolis or Takht-i Jamshed (Kiash’s Plates 26 & 27). In one portrait (Pl. 26), the king while saying his prayer before the fire in two vases, bears in his hand the royal mace (the *vazra* of the Avesta). In another (Pl. 27), the winged figure of the King, or to speak more properly the winged figure of the Fravashi or Farohar, the guiding spirit of the King, bears in his left hand a circle (Avesta *chakhra*), the symbol of righteous authority. The most notable instance of this, is that of a human winged figure with a peculiar horned crown, at Pasargadæ or Pasargard. The figure bears at the top an inscription which gives the name of Cyrus (Plate 53 of Kiash).

We find that the use of hands to express some emotions in prayers is referred to in the Avesta. That use

The use of Hands presented different attitudes. (a) The Vendidâd (Chap. V, 59) refers to “the stretching of hands in prayers” (*zasto fréné nizbarât*).

A woman in the state of menses (*dakhshtâvanti*), and a person who has a cut or a wound in his body from which there is a discharge of blood or filthy matter, are not considered to be in a proper condition necessary for worship. Perhaps, the worship referred to is not private or individual worship or prayer but common or joint worship. Their reverting, after recovery, to a proper clean state is spoken of as “stretching their hands in prayers”. (b) The Ahunavaiti Gâthâ (Yasna XXVIII, 1) refers to the prayer gesture of stretching out hands. The worshipper says: *Ahyâ yâsâ nemanghâ ustânazastô rafedhrahya manyêush Mazdâo paourvîm spentahya ashâ vispeng shkyaothnâ vanghêush khratûm mananghō yâ khshn-*

(1) J. R. A. S. of 1919, pp. 532-33.

vishâ gêushchâ urvânem, *i.e.*, I pray rapturously with all humility with uplifted¹ hands primarily for all righteous acts from the invisible bountiful Mazda and for wisdom resulting from good mind, so that, thereby, I may please the (very) soul of the universe. (c) In the Farvardin Yasht (Yt. XIII 50, 57), where prayers for the Fravashis or Farohars of the dear departed ones are referred to, they are spoken of as with "hands holding food and clothes" for the poor (gaomata Zasta vastravata usha-nâsa nemangha). (d) In Gatha Ushtavaiti (Yasna XLIII, 4), Ahura Mazda is represented as bestowing blessings both upon the sinful and the righteous with hands. (Zastâ.....hafshîashîsh).

In the Babylonian seals, where the various prayer attitudes are represented, we see the winged form of the genii. Among the Iranians, the Fravashis or Farohars are represented as flying.

The Winged genii of the Babylonians and the winged Farohars of the Iranians.

The Avesta refers to the winged form of the genii. It is said in the Farvardin Yasht (Yt. XIII 69-70), that the Fravashis, (the spiritual proto-types) of the righteous, fly to the help of those who invoke them in the form of winged birds or winged bird-like men. We read there :

Âat yat bavaiti avi-spashtô sâsta danghêush hamo-khshathrô aurvathæibyô parô tbishyanbyô, tâo haschit upa-zbayëitiavanghê.....tâo dim avi nifrâvayënti, mânayên ahê yatha nâ mërêgô hupêreno, *i.e.*, When the well-ruling King of a country is taken unawares (*i.e.*, is surprised) by a harmful enemy, then he invokes to his aid the powerful Fravashis of the righteousThey (The Fravashis) fly towards him (for help) like (*i.e.*, in the form of) well-winged man-like² birds.

The various Attitudes of the Worshipper's Hands. Now, we come to the various attitudes of the worshipper's hands. Dr. Langdon refers to the following :—

(1) The owner of the seal "conducted into the presence of a great seated deity by his own personal god, who leads his protégé by the hand.

(2) The right hand extended and the forearm raised parallel with the face, *palm inward*.

(3) Both hands folded at the waist.

¹ or out stretched, from us-tan (Sans. उर-तन Lat. *tendere*, Fr. *tendre*, Pers. tanudan) to stretch out.

² Dr. Geldner thinks this word unnecessary, but here the reference seems to be to forms half human and half bird-like.

(4) The palm not turned inward but facing the left. "The hand is thus brought into such position that the narrow surface on the side of the little finger is turned towards the deity."

Now let us see what the Iranian materials have to say about these attitudes.

In the Babylonian and Assyrian seals, 1. The attitude of being led by the hand. the gods are represented as leading their protégés by their hands before "a great seated deity". (a) Iranian writings, (b) sculptures and (c) ritual refer to this attitude.

(a) We learn from the Pahlavi *Ardâi Virâf-nâme*h, that, when *Ardâi Virâf*, the ancient Iranian Dante, was led in a vision to the other world to see Heaven and Hell, he was led by the hand by the *Yazatas* or angels, *Âtar* and *Sraosha*. We read *Virâf* saying "the two angels caught hold of my hands" (*zak-i li yadman farâz vakhdunt*, Chap. IV, 6;¹ V, 6; XI, 2, 13; XVI, 1). He was similarly led before *Ahuramazda*, the Supreme Deity and his *Ameshâspands* or archangels. (Ch. CI 1, 2.)

(b) We see the same attitude in some of the Iranian sculptures which refer to times much anterior to that when the above Pahlavi work was written. We see this in the sculptures at Persepolis (*vide* travels of Sir Robert Ker Porter in Georgia, Persia, Vol. I, pp. 604, 608 (six groups), 612 (five groups, Plates 37, 43); *vide* Mr. Kavasji Dinshawji Kiash's *Ancient Persian Sculptures*, Plates XI, XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII). Here a well-dressed person, armed with a mace and a dagger, holds by his left hand the right hand of another simple unarmed man and leads him. The second man is followed by several others, who carry in both their hands big bowls or cups containing, perhaps, various articles of presents or offerings. The second person is led either before a King to make presents as humble homage, or to a place of worship with offerings. The first person may be a courtier, and he may be leading, by the hand, citizens who came to pay their homage to the sovereign. But the mace and the sword do not preclude the possibility of his being a priest, because the Iranian priests also carried weapons, intended to be symbolic of spiritual weapons with which they were to strike and destroy the *Daêvas* or evil powers and influences. Even now, in the ceremonial procession of the *Nâvar*, the initiate or the candidate for priesthood carries with him a *gurz* (*Avesta vareza*, i.e., a mace), which he keeps underneath his bed for three nights, and in the *Yazashnagah* when he performs the liturgical services for four days. Ker Porter argues, that "the design of the artist is not to display

¹ The Text of Dr. Hoshangji, p. 16, etc.

a religious procession."¹ But one cannot definitely say that it is not a religious procession. His own long quotation² from Zenophon about Cyrus's procession with sacred bulls and horses, etc., points to a probability that the procession may perhaps be religious.

(c) Again, in the modern Parsee ritual, we see something of one person conducting another. In the very ceremony of Nâvar, above referred to, the initiate or the candidate is held by the hand by the priest who initiates him and is presented before the senior priest and the priestly assembly, from whom a formal permission is asked to initiate the candidate into priesthood. Again, in the celebration of the Yacna, on two occasions, one of the celebrants leads the other by the hand.

In the Persepolis sculptures, where we see the attitude of one person leading the other by the hand, we see two other peculiarities which seem to have escaped attention. In one of the sculptures (*vide* Ker Porter's Plate 37; *vide* also Plate on page 708), we see a person holding the skirt of another person who precedes him. We see this in both the groups of the above plate. Again, in some cases, we see one person placing his hand on the shoulder of another person preceding him (*Ibid*). What do these attitudes signify? What are they intended for? In the recital by an assembly, of the Âtash Nyâish, *i.e.*, the prayer in honour of the angel presiding over fire, we, at times, find the combination of all the varieties, above referred to, of holding the hand, etc. We see persons (a) holding others by the hand, (b) placing their hands on the shoulders of another and (c) holding others by the fringes of their dress. I will describe the process here at some length.

(a) When a Parsee recites his Âtash *nyâish*, during the recitals of some parts of the prayer, the worshipper holds a ladle over the fire-vase, so as to touch it. If he is saying the *nyâish* before the sacred fire of a Fire-temple, as he cannot go into the fire-chamber, wherein priests only can enter, during the above recitals he places his hand upon the door, or a window or the wall of the fire-chamber, the object being to establish some contact with the fire before him. In some fire-temples, some ornamental strings hanging from the ceiling are provided. The worshippers catch hold of these strings and thus create, during the above recital, a kind of contact with the sacred fire from a distance.

¹ Vol. I, p. 625.

² *Ibid*, p. 617.

In small or large gatherings or prayer meetings, for example, those held on occasions of public prayers (*jashans*) during the last war, or on occasions of joyous celebrations, they produce fire in a vase in the midst of the gathering and all say the *Ātash nyâish* standing round the fire. A priest holds, by one hand, a ladle over the vase during the above referred to recital of the portions of the *nyâish* and thus establishes, as it were, a contact between himself and the fire before which they pray. He gives his other hand to the person next to him. Then this second person gives his other unoccupied hand to a third person, who in turn gives one of his hands to a fourth person, and so on. The gathering may be large, say of hundreds and all thus hold each other by the hand. Some establish the contact by holding the fringe or skirt of another's upper garment. Some establish the contact by placing their hands on the shoulders of others who have formed a contact in one way or another. The principal aim or object is to establish a kind of contact with the Fire before whom they pray. As all cannot form a direct contact by holding a ladle on the fire-vase they form this indirect contact or contact through another's contact.

(b) During the recital of a prayer, recited on the occasions of *Gâhambârs* or season festivals, and known as *Gâhambâr ni pâvi*, so called because all the celebrants were expected to sit in a kind of circuit enclosed by a *pâvi* or a marked enclosure, a contact is established by all the celebrants either spreading the skirts of their upper ceremonial garment (*jâneh*) so as to touch one another or by placing their handkerchiefs between two persons when they do not sit close enough to touch one another.

(c) In the recital of the *Rapithavin Yaçna*, during a particular part of the ritual, the two celebrants, the *Zoti* and the *Râthwi*, establish a contact among themselves by holding the skirt of the *Sudreh* (sacred shirt) of the other who precedes him.

(d) In a Parsee funeral procession, one sees, even at present, the priests and other mourners going in the procession in pairs holding a handkerchief between them.

From all these considerations, I think, that in some cases, the idea of the attitude of holding another by the hand may be, that of leading him, and in others—where the holding of skirts of each others clothes and the placing of one's hand upon the shoulder of another are variants—that of establishing a contact. The creation of the contact was ultimately meant to express co-operation and sympathy in the particular work.

Dr. Langdon thus refers to another attitude of the hand in the Babylonian worship: "On Fig. 2, an attendant

2. The attitude of the right hand extended and the forearm raised parallel to the face *palm inward*.

brings the animal sacrifice; the reader will observe that this attendant approaches with the right arm extended and the forearm raised parallel with the face *palm-inward*. Observe also that the conducting deities approach with disengaged arm, raised in a similar

manner *palms inward*: On seal Fig. 7 three deities approach the seated grain goddess. The central figure (a goddess) of these three has the most ancient attitude of prayer for humans, the raised hand *palm inward* and the disengaged arm folded at the waist. These are all archaic types extending back to a period as early as 3,500 B.C. From them we conclude that man, when not conducted by a deity, stood in the position of prayer described above. This is apparently the original prayer attitude of prehistoric man in Sumer."

Now, let us see, what have the Iranian materials to say on the subject of this attitude. Herein, we have two attitudes combined into one. (a) Extended or outstretched hand and (b) the forearm or the disengaged arm raised parallel with the face *palm inward*.

Among the Assyrians, the phrase "lifting of the hand" for prayers was purely technical and borrowed, along with the prayers, from the Babylonians.¹ (a) The extended or outstretched hands. In the later Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods, there prevailed "the open hand position." During that period, the term for "to pray" was "to open the hands" and not "to raise the hands."² But, it seems,—we cannot say positively, because the instances are not many—that according to the Avesta "stretching the hands" was the technical phrase of the Iranians. In practice, the stretching and opening seemed to mean the same thing. The Iranian sculptures seem to support this posture. There are cases of hands "opened" as well as "stretched or raised or uplifted." In the celebration of the liturgical ceremony of the Yaçna, just a little before the commencement of the recital of the Yaçna proper, commencing with the first chapter (*nivaêdhaêyêmi hankârayêmi*), the two celebrants join their two hands in an outstretched position and recite the prayer of "Frastuyê humatoîbyaschâ", which prayer is spoken of by some as the Patet, *i.e.*, the Penitence prayer of the Avesta. Not only do they join their two hands into an outstretched position but also their feet. To join the

1 J. R. A. S.; Oct. 1920., p. 539.

2 *Ibid*, p. 541.

feet they place the toe of the right foot over the toe of the left. The ritual is thus described in Gujarati in modern books of the ritual "જોતી તથા રાથવી બંધે જનાં હાથ જોડી પોતાનાં જમનાં પગનાં અંગોઠાં ડાબા પગનાં અંગોઠાં ઊપર ચઢડાવી પરગટ પડે." *i.e.*, Both the Zaoti and the Râthvi shall join their hands and put the toe of the right foot over the toe of the left, and then pray. The object of joining the two hands and joining the two feet is to indicate sincere devotion. એક પગે ખુદાની બંદગી કરવી *i.e.*, "to pray God with (*i.e.*, standing on) one foot," is the phrase for saying a prayer with all devotion. One cannot join his two feet in a standing position as he would join his two hands. So, the next best way is to place the toe of one foot over the toe of another.

We see a parallel of the Balyonian attitude in the Iranian sculptures of Persipolis and elsewhere. (*Vide* Plates XXVII and XXXVI of Kiash's *Ancient Persian Sculptures*.) There, in one case, we find the winged flying figure of a king holding a disc (*Avesta chakhra*) in his left hand and his right hand extended but palm outward. In another case, the left hand carries, what seems to be, a bundle of *barsam twigs*. This attitude of the hand signifies blessing. Iranian winged figures are associated with *fravashis* or *farohars*, which are the guiding spirits of persons. These *fravashis* are represented as blessing the people of the house where they are invoked (*khshnûtâo âfrîmentu ahmya nmânê. Farvardin Yasht. Yt. XIII, 157*).

The show of hands in favour of propositions in the modern rules and regulations for the proceedings of public meetings seems to be a form of this attitude of hands for blessings. Those who raise their hands in favour of a proposition raise them, as it were, to bless the proposition. The Masonic ritual seems to have preserved this attitude well, because in that craft, the show of hands in favour of propositions is not like that at ordinary meetings but in the attitude of blessing, the right hand extended palm downward.

Now, as to the second component of the above attitude, *viz.*, the raising of the forearm parallel with

(b) The forearm the face palm inward, which according to raised parallel with Dr. Langdon is "the most ancient attitude the face palm inward. of prayer for humans,"—I think, we find a parallel of this attitude in what is observed, even now, by the Zoroastrian clergy during the recital of the Patet (the prayer for penitence). In practice, the attitude is not observed exactly by all alike, *i.e.*, the arm is not kept parallel to the

face by all; but some elders of the priestly assembly, in the midst of deep devotion observe it strictly.

It is this Babylonian attitude, and it is Dr. Langdon's description and explanation of it, that have much interested me and has led me specially to the study of the subject of this paper from an Iranian point of view. Among Zoroastrian religious prayers, there is one, which is called the Patet, *i.e.*, prayer of penitence (Av. *paitita* from Av. *paiti*;—Sans. prati प्रत, Lat. *re*, back, and Av. *i* Sans. *i* 𐬎 Lat. *i-re* to go; a prayer whereby the worshipper goes back to the proper path). While reciting that prayer of penitence, Parsees hold up before, or parallel to, their face their left hand. The prayer takes about 15 minutes to recite and the left hand is, during all this time, held up before the face. I confess, that it is after the perusal of Dr. Langdon's paper, that I understood the proper signification of this attitude of the Parsee worshippers' hands. According to Dr. Langdon, in some Babylonian seals, the posture of the attitude of hands varies. In some cases, it is associated with "penitential prayers." So, I think, that the attitude observed in the Zoroastrian or Parsee Patet or penitential prayer is a relic of the old attitude, wherein the worshipper raised his disengaged arm parallel to his face. In practice, as said above, the attitude is not observed exactly by all alike, *i.e.*, the arm is not kept parallel to the face by all, but the elders in the priestly assembly observe the attitude strictly and correctly.

There is one peculiarity in the modern Parsee custom, still observed, which shows that the forearm must be strictly parallel to the face, so that the palm-inward portion of the arm may be just before the mouth. That peculiarity consists in covering the palm-end portion of the hand with a piece of cloth. A handkerchief, or a sleeve of the upper garment, or the shawl in the case if the worshipper is a head priest or Dastur, serves the purpose. In the Babylonian and Assyrian prayer gestures of this kind, we do not see it. Then, what is the object of this covering among the Parsees? According to the Zoroastrian health-laws, the saliva of the mouth being unclean, if the hand has touched the saliva of the mouth, it must be washed. Now, when the worshipper holds, during the recital of the prayer, his left forearm *palm inwards* parallel to his face, which position places it just opposite to the mouth, there is a chance of some particles of the saliva falling on the palm and thus polluting it. I think that, it is to protect the palm from this pollution, that it is covered with some kind of cloth. This practice of holding some kind of cloth on the inward part of the palm, held parallel to the face and before the mouth, is spoken

of now, in the modern ritual phraseology, as *padân karvun* (𐬯𐬀𐬎𐬎 𐬕𐬀𐬵𐬎) i.e., to do the *padân*. *Padân* (𐬯𐬀𐬎) is a later Pahlavi form of the Avastai *paitidâna* (𐬯𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎)

from *paiti* front and *dâ* to keep) i.e., that which is kept in front of the face. The *padân* was, and is even now, put on by the Parsi *Âthornâns* (*Âthravans* or Fire-priests) when they go before the sacred fire, so that their breath or particles of the saliva of their mouth may not pollute the fire before them. They put it on even when they say their *Âfringan* and *Bâj* prayers before the *myazd*, i.e., the offerings of fruits and flowers, or their liturgical prayers of the *Yaçna*, etc. Some kind of cloth-cover for the face was also put on by the *Flamines*, the fire-priests of the ancient Romans.

When asked, why the hand, covered as said above, was held before the face in the *Patet* or penitence prayers, the explanation now offered was, that it was another form of the ritual of *padân* observed before the Fire or before sacred offerings or sacred utensils or liturgical apparatus. But, in the recital of the *Patet*, when recited jointly in an assembly or singly, there is no fire, or any sacred offering or utensil before the worshippers. So, why was the *padân* required in that recital? I think, we now learn, as said above, the proper signification, from the Babylonian attitude. There must be among the ancient Iranians, as among the Babylonians, the custom of holding the hand before the face, during the recital of *Patets* or penitential prayers. That custom has come down from their Iranian ancestors to the present Parsees with the additional requisite of a cloth-cover over the inward portion of the palm to protect it from pollution by the particles of the saliva of the mouth. The main point is the raising of the hand, palm inwards, parallel to the face. Then the covering of the hand is a second subsidiary point that has arisen from the first main point.

This form or ritual of *padân karvun* is observed by Parsee priests, in assemblies for the celebration of *Jashans*, wherein *Afringan* prayers are recited. The two principle celebrants—the *Zaoti* and the *Âtravakhshi*—put on the actual *padân* on their faces. But the rest hold their covered hands, palm inwards, parallel to their faces and before their mouth. Here there is no special recital of the *Patet* or penitential prayer. So, in this case, the attitude may be taken as an attitude of prayer, whether connected or not with penitence. In ceremonial customs and attitudes, social or religious, we have, at times, a number of

permutations and combinations of the various forms of one and the same custom or attitude or of different customs and attitudes.

It is the left hand which observes the above attitude among the Parsees. In many Zoroastrian rituals, first, it is the left hand that plays a prominent part, when an attitude is to be continued for some time. The right hand is kept disengaged for various other small observances or performances, e.g., to feed the fire. The holding of the twigs of a particular kind of tree in the ritual of the Yacna was held necessary. These twigs were called *barsam*. The Vendidad (Ch. XIX, 19) enjoins that these sacred twigs must be held in the left hand (*hâvôya zasta*). In one of the sculptures at Persipolis or Takht-i Jamshed, the king who prays before a fire vase, holds the royal mace (Av. *vazra* : Pers. *Gurz.*) in his right hand and a bunch in his left hand. This bunch seems to be a bunch of the *barsam* twigs (*vide* Plates 25 and 26 in Mr. K. D. Kiash's "Ancient Persian Sculptures"). In other sculptures at the same place, where the king holds out his right hand in a prayer gesture, there also the sacred *barsam* twigs are held in the left hand (*Ibid.*, pl. 36).

In the Iranian sculptures it is also the left hand which does the principal work that has to last long. For example, in the case of the winged figures of the praying kings (Plates 36 and 47 of Kiash), it is the left hand that does the continuous work of holding the symbolic disc, or the *barsam* or the bow, and the disengaged right hand that is outstretched, palm sidewise, expresses the attitude of prayer.

Dr. Langdon thinks that "the attitude with hands folded at the waist" was assumed by the Babylonian worshipper in some formal prayers, and it denoted "humility, submission, contrition." This attitude is referred to in the Pahlavi *Virâf-nâmeh*, where it seems to be an attitude of consent and obedience. When Ardâi Virâf was selected from among many for a journey to the other world, he stood up and folded his hands on his breast (*madam val regalman ikvîmûnât va yadman pavan kash kard*. Chap. I, 36-37). When he was finally selected for the heavenly journey from among the three best, by drawing lots, he, as an expression of consent and acceptance, folded his hands upon the waist (*yadman pavan kash vâdûnd*: Chap. II, 21). We see no figures with folded hands in Iranian sculptures. At present, you may see priests in prayer assemblies occasionally sitting with folded hands, but with no formal purpose. They fold or unfold the

hands as they like when the hands are otherwise not engaged in particular attitudes of ritual. In modern Parsee phraseology, his particular attitude of hands is spoken of as "*adab vâlvi*," i.e., "to fold the adab", where the word "*adab*" is Arabic adab (ادب) meaning "courtesy, politeness." The word has nothing to do with hands, though the words intend an attitude of folding hands. In assemblies of solemnity, gay or sorrowful, like those of funerals or marriage or even in prayer assemblies we see persons here and there sitting with folded hands, but that attitude is in no way necessarily connected with any prayer gesture though it signifies a kind of resignation or submission to the will of God.

According to Dr. Langdon, the above attitude of folded hands, latterly gave way "in favour of the kissing-hand (or kiss-throwing hand) position with one arm folded

The "Kiss hand" at the waist. This widely adopted attitude of Babylonian religion seems to have been introduced by the Semites of the first dynasty as a simple means of containing the two principle religious poses of the Sumerians. They thus continued the ideas of salutation and humility."¹ The kiss-hand pose at one time "prevalent in Greece and Rome" prevailed in Sumeria from the very earliest period. It seems to have come to the Babylonians from the Sumerians, as "the second great hand movement in religious psychology" and fundamentally conveying "the idea of salutation, greeting, adoration."²

According to Herodotus, kissing was a form of salutation among the Iranians of the Achæmenian times. He says: When they meet one another in the streets, one may discover by the followig custom, whether those who meet are equals. For instead of accosting one another, they kiss on the mouth; if one be little inferior to the other they kiss the cheek; but if he be of a much lower rank, he prostrates himself before the other."³

But in prayer attitudes, the kissing hand posture does not seem to be possible among the Iranians from the standpoint of their view of pollution and sanitation. Whatever comes out from the mouth was polluted and unhealthy. The Parsees generally, even now, would not drink from the same cup. The officiating priest, holding the Bareshnûm ritual, would not drink even from the same pot, though the pot may not have touched the lip of the previous drinker. If the hand accidently

¹ J. R. A. S., Oct. 1920, p. 546.

² *Ibid.*, p. 544.

³ Herodotus Bk. I, 134. Cary's Translation (1889) p. 61.

touched any moist part of the lips, it was required to be washed. So, the kissing pose of hand in religious ritual or prayers is not observed among the Iranians.

In a sculpture at Persipolis (Kiâsh, Pl. 90) there appears a pose of the hand, which one may very plausibly take to be a kiss-throwing pose, but I think it is another form of the pose of the arm raised parallel to the face palm inward. Had it been a kiss-throwing pose, it would have been with the right hand, but it is not so. The pose is that of the left hand though the right hand is disengaged.

But a certain pose or attitude of both the hands is prevalent among the Parsees from olden times, which comes somewhat nearer to this attitude, which seems to be akin to what is known as the "Kiss of Peace" among the ancient Hebrews and the early Christians, and which is still prevalent among some Israels. This Hebrew or early Christian Kiss of Peace may have come down from the ancient Babylonian attitude of the kissing hand. This attitude or pose of both the hands is known among the Parsees even now as Hamâzor, wherein one person lets his two hands pass alternately between the two hands of another, and after two passes of that kind, both carry the two hands to the head in the form of a salutation. The Israels and the early Christians did the same thing, but in the end kissed their hands. For details of the Parsee custom I will refer my readers to my Paper entitled "The Kiss of Peace, among the Israels and the Hamâzor among the Zoroastrians" read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay.¹

Next to the attitude of the extended hand arm raised parallel to the face, *palm inward*, it is the pointed finger attitude of the hand among the Babylonians referred to by Dr. Langdon that has interested me greatly from the Iranian or Parsee point of view. Dr. Langdon refers to the "extraordinary pointed finger attitude of the Assyrians as they worshipped before statues and sacred symbols" and says that "it is really the kiss-throwing hand arrested in the last stage of the act and thrown with the index-finger only."² I will not enter here into the psychology of this attitude and say what it meant among the Babylonians and Assyrians, but proceed to refer to a similar pose among the Iranians, (a) in their sculptures and (b) in their rituals.

(a) We find this attitude in several Iranian sculptures. In one of the sculptures at a place named Naksh-i-Shapur, which is

¹ Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay. Vol. VIII, pp. 84-95. *Vide* my Anthropological Papers, Part I, pp. 283-94.

² J. R. A. S., Oct. 1919, p. 546.

supposed by Mr. Kiash to depict the surrender of the Roman Emperor Valerian to the Iranian King Shapur I, there are two rows of Persian horsemen who all point the index-finger of their right hand to their King, while before the King there stand three figures, supposed to be Roman courtiers with both hands extended and opened palm upwards asking forgiveness for a person in fetters before them, supposed to be Valerian (Kiash's Ancient Persian Sculptures, Pl. 12). In another sculpture of the same king (*Ibid*, Pl. 13), supposed to be a triumphal scene, we see similarly, two rows of horsemen, each of 14 troopers pointing their right hand index-finger to the Iranian King. In another sculpture (*Ibid*, Pl. 39) which seems to be a coronation scene, the King, while receiving from the Mobadân Mobad, the archimagus, the Iranian archbishop, the royal disc or circlet (charkh) with his right hand, holds his left hand closed as in a fist with the pointed thumb before his face. This seems to be another pose of the pointed finger attitude. It also, like the pointed finger, signifies, obedience, consent, acceptance. It seems that persons of lower grade, when they wanted to express a posture of obedience, respect, agreement, or consent, in the presence of their superiors, did so with the index-finger. But persons of higher rank generally did so with all the five-fingers folded, as if forming a fist with the thumb pointing a little upwards.

Vide the following plates for one or another of these finger or thumb postures expressive of obedience, respect, agreement, etc.

- (1) Kiâsh, Pl. 41. Shapur I at Naksh-i-Rustam. Index-finger by a subordinate standing behind the King.
- (2) *Ibid.*, Pl. 42. Closed fist with the thumb upwards. A Coronation Scene at Naksh-i-Rustam.
- (3) *Ibid.*, Pl. 43. Index-finger at Naksh-i-Rustam. Behrâm Gore or Behram V.
- (4) *Ibid.*, Pl. 44. Index-finger

(b) Coming to the modern rituals we find that the Parsees, in the recital of their Afringân prayers, recite a section, which is common to all the Afringâns and which is in honour of the ruling King of the land. The Zoroastrian priests of Persia, during this recital, hold up their fingers. The Indian Parsee priests, instead of holding up their fingers, hold up a flower in their hands. Here, the flower seems to serve the purpose of a finger. The flower is held up in the right hand, the arm of which is raised up well-nigh parallel to the face.

Now, what does the holding up of the finger in Iranian Archæology and in the Zoroastrian ritual in Persia, or the holding up of the flower as a substitute in the Zoroastrian ritual

in India signify? It signifies assent, approval, agreement. The particular section of the *Âfringân* (lit. the prayer of blessing), invokes God's blessing upon the ruler (*khshathriya*) of the land. At this recital, all the priests of the prayer-assembly raise up their fingers in Persia and flowers in India, to express their heartfelt assent and good-will in the benediction.

The Tibetans observe the Buddhist religion at present. But their old religion is said to be the Bon religion, some elements of which they have embodied in their religion. Their old Bon religion seems to have come to them from some part of Central Asia where their ancestors may have had a home common with that of the early Iranians. Their custom of the disposal of the dead, which resembles that of the modern Parsees of India and much more resembles that enjoined in the *Vendidad* from which the modern Parsees of India seem to have diverted a little, points to this very early relation. When at Darjeeling in the summer of 1913, I had the pleasure of visiting often three Gumpas or monasteries of the Tibetan Lamas there. My long talks with the Lamas and my study of the works of great writers and travellers of Tibet, like Col. Weddel, Rai Sarat Chandra Bahâdur, Mons. L. De Milloue, Mr. Rockhill, Dr. Sven Hedin and Mons. Bonvalot, showed me some points of similarity between some Tibetan and Zoroastrian beliefs and customs. As I said then, I understood some parts of my *Vendidad* better there and then, than at home before.

Now these Tibetans have a form of salutation and of expression of assent or approval which resembles the above referred to Zoroastrian form of expressing consent by the raising of a finger. This form is that of raising up their thumbs. "Pulling the thumb up means approval and satisfaction."¹ One way of expressing their thanks is that of lifting up the thumbs. According to Rockhill, "throughout Tibet, to say a thing is very good, they hold up the thumb with the fingers closed and say 'Angetumbo re' i.e., it is the thumb; it is the first. Second class is expressed by holding up the index with the remark 'angé nyiba ré,' it is the second." Mr. Rockhill says of one part of Tibet: "The mode of salutation among the people in this section of the country is novel. They hold out both hands, palms upper-most." This mode of salutation is prevalent among the Mongols also. Rockhill says further on: "The lower classes here, when saluting superiors, are in the habit of bending the knee very low, putting the right hand beside the right cheek and the left hand under the elbow of the right arm, at the same time sticking out the tongue." In one

¹ "Across Tibet, etc.," by Bonvalot, p. 98.

part of Tibet, according to Mr. Sarat Chandra, "it is customary to greet one another with a kiss, and whoever omits a kiss when meeting or parting with an acquaintance is considered rude and unmannerly."¹ In many of the old age beliefs and customs of the Tibetans, who have continued to live in an isolated condition surrounded by lofty mountains, we see a good deal which explains some of the early Babylonian and Iranian forms of belief and salutation.

From all these considerations we see that the finger and thumb attitude as seen in more than one bas-relief of Iranian sculpture was an attitude expressing satisfaction and assent.

In many a ritual of the Church, in almost all communities, there prevails, what we may call, a shortening

Various attitudes of the hand and their significations as observed among the Iranians.

process. I have referred to it in my Paper on Tibetan rosaries read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay.² There seems to have prevailed the same shortening-process in the matter of the attitude

or pose of hands in prayers. In spite of the shortening process, we see prevailing, side by side, all the various attitudes from the first primitive longest to the latest shortest. From religious gatherings and religious surroundings to social gatherings and social surroundings is one step, though the step may occasionally be long. So, we see many customs prevalent both in Church and Society. From a study of the attitudes of the hand, as referred to in Iranian books, sculptures and ritual, we may draw the following conclusions:—

1. The outstretched hands raised a little above, somewhat parallel to the face, palm upwards, pointing heavenwards, was the primitive pose, expressive of imploration of God's help and forgiveness. That was also the posture or pose for asking forgiveness from another person, whether a prince or peer. In an Iranian bas-relief of Darius (Kiâsh's Plate 55), a fallen person lying prostrate on the ground face upward, implores forgiveness from the king by raising both his hands and feet upwards, towards the face of the king.

2. The use of one hand in place of two is the next step. It is the first step in the shortening process. When the left hand was occupied in holding a religious symbol like the *barsam* at first, and like the *chakra* (a wheel, disc or circlet) and bow later on, the right hand only was similarly extended. (*Vide* the sculptures of Persipolis, Plate 36 of Kiâsh; of Behistun, *Ibid.*, Pl. 55.) These may be said to be very early Avestan or Achæmenian poses.

¹ Journey to Lhassa and Central Tibet, p. 137.

² Vol. X, pp. 139-56, My "Anthropological Papers", Part II, pp. 92-109.

In ceremonial gatherings like those of large religious congregations or court assemblies, when the left hands held some symbols of authority, for example the bow in the case of Achæmænian kings, the right hand was free for expression of emotions. For example, Darius, holding a bow in his left hand, extends his right hand towards the state prisoners before him, and, pointing his index-finger towards them, tells them some words of caution or advice.

3. The left hand extended and arm raised parallel to the face was the next pose derived from the first pose as the result of the shortening process. One cannot keep both his hands extended as above very long during the recital of a long prayer. So, the left hand came to be so extended but not so much as to fatigue the worshipper. The right hand was kept disengaged for other religious or ordinary purposes, *e.g.*, to feed the sacred fire before the worshipper with sandalwood and frank incense (*aêsam bûi*), or to form a contact with the fire-vase during particular recitals, or to extend it to the other worshippers to create a sympathetic contact, or to guide others by gestures. When, by this shortening process, the left hand gradually came to be very close to the mouth, in order to avoid pollution, it had to be covered with *padân* or a piece of cloth.

4. Coming to later times, we find the pose of folded hands (*adab*) expressing submission, consent, obedience, etc. For example, Ar dai Viraf folds his hands on his breast to express such an emotion. When you fold your hands, you shut off your hands, as it were, from any work; you express helplessness and surrender, and hence consent, or obedience. "Fold up hands" was, as it were, the older form of later "Hold up hands."

5. This is the case in the matter of voluntary submission. But, in case of compulsory submission, both the hands are voluntarily held backwards on the waist at the back or are chained in a similar position. (*Vide* Kiasch's Plate 50, where the nine rebel princes are made to stand in that position, with a common rope passing through the necks of all.)

Then, occasionally, instead of both the hands being folded on the waist, we find one folded and the other working.

6. The pointed-finger or thumb pose seems to be a much later form. Instead of both the hands or of one hand being used in supplication, there came in the use of one finger. Of course, at times, in the shortening-process, there came in also some additional signification. In a sculpture at Kermanshah, supposed to be a coronation scene, there is a picture, supposed to be that of a Zoroastrian, where the person instead of pointing his hands

or hand seems to point his wand towards God. In some later varieties of that picture, we see the person pointing towards Heaven with his finger.

We find some prayer attitudes of hands in the Sassanian coins. (a) We find the attitude of arm raised parallel to the face palm inward in some of the coins. For example, in the coin of Varahran II (Nos. 3 and 5 of Plates IV of Longperier's *Essai sur les Médailles des Rois Perses de la Dynastie Sassanide*). The worshipper, who is the king himself, stands before the altar of the Sacred Fire in that posture, while on the other side of the altar stands the fire-priest holding up a *chakhra* (disc or circlet), an emblem of royalty or royal authority, in the attitude of placing it on the fire. I think it is actually a *chakhra* or circlet of sandal-wood or some other fragrant wood, that the fire-priest (*Āthravan*, the Iranian Flamine) is placing on the fire. He receives it from the royal worshipper who brings it as an offering before the Sacred Fire and hands it to the priest whose function is to feed the fire.

In the modern ritual of feeding the Sacred fire of the *Ātash Behrām*, the Fire-temple of the first grade—the ritual known as *bui dādan* بوی دادن *i.e.*, to give fragrant fuel, the priest goes round the fire-vase in a particular enjoined way.¹ The ritual is now spoken of as “*chak farvo*.” I think, that possibly, the word *chak* may be a corrupted form of *chakhra*, and so, the above words of the ritual may mean “to go round in a circle (round the fire).” The modern ritual of *māchi* over the sacred fire is another form of offering fragrant fuel in the form of a royal disc. The modern *māchi* (lit. a throne, a seat) is in the form of a throne, arranged by placing six or seven pieces of sandal-wood.

(b) Another hand posture which we observe on the Sassanian coins is that of both, the worshipping king and the serving fire-priest, holding some long stick-like forms (Ibid Nos. 1, 2 and 4). They may be metallic ladles. One cannot understand why their faces are not turned towards the fire but away from the fire, when they hold the ladle. It is true, that even now, in the modern ritual of feeding the sacred fire, in one part of the recital of the *Atash-nyaish*—the recital of the “*Dādar gehān diŋ-i-Māzda-yaçni*, etc.,” formula, the worshipper has to turn to the south. But one cannot understand why is it generally so in the case of the worshippers with the ladles or sticks in their hands.

¹ *Vide* my Paper on Consecration Ceremonies before the Anthropological Society Journal, Vol. XI, p. 517.

(c) In some later coins (Varaharan III, Narses, Hormsidas II and others, Ibid Plate V Nos. 1 to 5 and Plot VI) the ladles are short. Here the picture of the ladles is like that of the hand raised parallel to the face. The ladles or metallic sticks seem to replace the hand posture. This is very clearly marked in the case of the coins of Artaxerxes II and Shapur III (Ibid Pl. VII). In some coins, the royal worshipper has a short laddle while the priest has a long one.

In the case of a coin of Chosroes I, we find the picture of folded hands (Ibid Pl. X 4).

In the case of short laddles in some coins, they are held up from the waist upwards, and in others, they are rested on the ground. The latter is the posture in which one can now see, at times, Parsee priests standing before the fire.

The above different postures can also be studied from Thomas's "Numismatic and other Antiquarian Illustrations of the Rule of the Sassanians in Persia (1873)."

In all the above attitudes, I have referred to the Iranian attitudes or prayer gestures of hand, wherein God or the Higher Intelligences or Higher Powers are appealed to or implored. But, there are certain attitudes which express emotions of disgust or detestation of what is bad or evil. I will conclude my Paper with a few words on these attitudes. Some of these prayers for these expressions of detestation are later. They are not in the original Avesta, but are in later Pazend. They are more of what we call incantations for the removal of evils of all sorts including the pest of noxious animals like serpents, snakes, wolves, cats, rats, etc. In the Vanant Yasht, there are incantations of that kind, and the later ritual enjoins that during their recital, the worshipper, must strike the palm of one hand (the left hand) with the other hand,—at one part of the recital, once; at another part, twice; and at three other parts, thrice.

In other similar incantations and in various parts of the Avesta, where the name of Angra Mainyu, the Ahriman or the Evil Power is mentioned, or where evil influences or powers are referred to, the worshipper puts the thumb of his right hand over the central finger and gives it a slip, so as to produce a sound, spoken of in modern phraseology as *tachâkdi* or snapping. The same emotion is expressed by an outward motion of the right hand *palm inwards*, expressing an idea of repulsion.