

A PARSI PRAYER, PRESENTING PASSAGES,
PARALLEL TO THOSE OF TWO GREEK
AND CHINESE ANECDOTES.

In the Bulletin (Vol. II Part IV (1923) pp. 609-11) of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution, Mr. Lionel Giles gives, under the heading, "Two Parallel Anecdotes in Greek and Chinese," anecdotes from Chinese and Greek writings, wherein persons express their satisfaction for having been born in a certain condition.

(a) Confucius asks an old Chinaman: "What is it that makes you happy?" He replies: "I have a great deal to make me happy. God created all things, and of all His creations man is the noblest. It has fallen to my lot to be a man; that is my first ground for happiness. Then there is a distinction between male and female, the former being rated more highly than the latter. Therefore it is better to be a male; and since I am one, I have a second ground of happiness. Furthermore, some are born who never behold the sun or the moon and who never emerge from their swaddling-clothes. But I have already walked the earth for the space of ninety years. That is my third ground for happiness. Poverty is the normal lot of the scholars, death the appointed end for all human beings. Abiding in the normal state, and reaching at last the appointed end, what is there that should make me unhappy?"

(b) As a parallel Greek passage, Mr. Giles quotes from Plutarch's Life of Marius (§ 46), a passage, wherein Plato on the approach of his death, "gave thanks to his familiar spirit and to Fortune for that, in the first place, he had been born a man and not a brute devoid of reason, and in the second, a Greek and not a barbarian; and moreover, that his birth had happened to fall within the life-time of Socrates."

(c) Mr. Giles gives another passage from Diogenes Laertius (I, VII, 33), who lived probably in the second century A.C., which says: "Hermippus, in his Lives, attributes to our philosopher (Thales) a saying which is sometimes told of Socrates. According to this authority, he used to say that he gave thanks to Fortune for three things in particular: firstly, because he had been born a man and not a beast; secondly, because he was a male and not a female; and thirdly, a Greek and not a barbarian."

From these Chinese and Greek passages, we find the following to be the causes for which the parties felt happy :—

(1) *Chinese*.—Having been born (a) a Man, not a beast. (b) a Male, not a female. (c) Growing up to ripe old age, not dying early.

(2) *Greek*.—Having been born (a) a Man and not a beast (b) a Greek, not a barbarian (c) a Male, not a female.

Now, we have a Parsi thanks-giving prayer which refers to some similar parallel causes of happiness. The prayer is known as Nemâz-i-Dâdâr Hormazd (نماز دادار هرمزد). The prayer is in Pazend and is given in full in Avesta characters in the "Pazend Texts" (pp. 206-7) by Ervad Edalji Kersaspji Antia (1909), published by the Trustees of the Funds and Properties of the Parsee Panchayat. This is not a daily recited prayer, but it is recited by few and on rare occasions. It is given in Avesta characters in the Persian Rivâyet of Darab Hormazdyar.* As the heading of the prayer, we read the following :—

این ستایش هر روز بگاه ہاوان بعد از نیایش خورشید و مہر خواندن
زیرا کہ درین ستایش سپاس دادار اورمزد بیشتر است

i.e., This prayer of Praise is to be recited every day in the Hâvan gâh after the recital of the Nyaishes of Khurshid and Meher, because, in this prayer, there is much of thanks to Dadar Hormazd.

In this Pazend thanks-giving prayer, the worshipper thanks God for the following favours.

(1) For the ages that have passed with prosperity (nek zamân) and not with adversity (anâkih or halâkih-i-zamân). From the very beginning of creation (bûn-dahishneh) till this day (im-ruz), the Heavens have moved in their full splendour, the Earth in its extensive width, the rivers in their full length, the sun in the high heavens, the waters in their running course,

* Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat by Ervad Maneckji Rustomje Unwala, with an Introduction by me (1922), Vol. I, pp. 411-413. This prayer is given in Gujarati characters in Parsee Prayer-books known as Tamâm Khordeh Avesta. It is recently published in Gujarati characters, with Gujarati translation, by Mr. Pheroze Shapurjee Masani (1920), in his 'Pazend Setâyish bâ mâni' pp. 1-9. It is translated into French by Prof. Darmesteter in his "Le Zend Avesta," Troisième Volume pp. 187-190. It is also translated by him in his "Une Prière-Judeo-Persane" (1891) pp. 7-11.

the trees in their growth, and the sun, moon and stars in their full brilliance. All this will continue from now to the Day of Resurrection (Rastâkhîz).

(2) For having been born (*a*) an *Airi.e.* Aryan or Iranian (and not an un-Iranian), (*b*) and a follower of the good (Mazdayasnân,) religion (hu-din), and (*c*) with the enjoyment of all physical and mental powers, such as, wisdom, good sense, repose, good eye-sight, use of hands and feet, good food, good clothings and all such blessings (hamâ neki).

(3) For having been born of the race of Man (Chihr-i-mardumân) with powers to hear, speak and see.

(4) For having been born Free (âzâd), and not a bondsman or slave (bandeh).

(5) For having been born a Male (mard) and not a Female (zan).

(6) For (God or the Prophet) having commanded, that meals be taken silently after the recital of grace (bâj, vâz-khur), and not talking loud (darâyân).

(7) For being in a position to see and enjoy all the gifts of God, such as the high heaven, the warming sun, the cattle-seeded moon*, the brilliant fire, the Halo or The Glory of a reigning monarch (Khoreh-i Pâdshâh), fertile land, running waters, useful trees and herbs, good dress, modest handsome women, sweet eloquence in an assembly (anjuman), cheerful friends, companions, brethren, and near ones and all good enjoyments (Râm khâstra).

From among this long list of blessings, deserving thanks to God, we find, that the following present parallels to the blessings mentioned in the above Chinese and Greek writings. Having been born (*a*) An Iranian not a non-Iranian, corresponding to the Greek blessing of being born a Greek and not a Barbarian, (*b*) a man (not a beast), (*c*) a male and not a female. (*d*) The Chinese blessing of living a good old age has a parallel, though not direct, in the passage of thanks for the full enjoyment of all God's creations.

There are two other blessings in the Parsee prayer which require a mention. They are (*a*) of having been born in the

* According to the Mah Nyaish, the Moon has some influence on the good growth of the cattle. *Vide* my paper on "The Ancient Iranian Belief and Folklore about the Moon. Some cognate Beliefs among other Nations" (Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay of 1917. *Vide* my "Anthropological Papers" Part II., pp. 302-26.)

good (Mazdayasnân) Faith and (b) free, not a bondsman. Prof. Darmesteter has, in his above referred to paper, "Une Prière Judeo-Persane," shown the parallels of these in the Jewish Litany of the morning prayer. He gives the following three forms :—

"Beni soit l'Éternel, notre Dieu, maître du monde, (a) qui ne m'a pas fait naître idolâtre. . . (b) qui ne m'a pas fait naître esclave . . . (c) qui ne m'a pas fait naître femme." (p. 11.)

Of these three, the first two are common with the Parsi prayer and the third is common to the prayers of all the above four people, the Chinese, the Greeks, the Parsis and the Jews.

Prof. Darmesteter discusses the question as to "Who borrowed? the Parsees from the Jews, or the Jews from the Parsees?" He concludes that it were the Parsees who borrowed. We are led to agree with him, especially from the point of view of the parallel of the prayer offering thanks to God for being born a male and not a female. When we look to the fact, (a) that the Parsee prayer is comparatively later, (b) when we remember the fact that according to the older Avesta, the holy spirits of pious women were invoked and honoured like those of pious men, and (c) when we find, that in the Avesta, women are represented as holding a high position in society, we are easily inclined to think, that, as Darmesteter has said, the borrowing may have been by the Persians from the Jews.

I conclude this paper with my Translation of the Parsee prayer :—

TRANSLATION OF THE NEMÂZ-I DÂDÂR HORMAZD.

1. "Adoration to Ahura Mazda, the brilliant, glorious, omniscient, wise, powerful¹, one who makes (others) powerful, pardoner perpetually good doer, perpetually well-preserver, who perpetually keeps away harm, successful worker, victorious king, victorious monarch, who is worthy of praise and holy.

2. O Creator, Ahura Mazd ! I am under your (*tôî*) obligation, I am under obligation by (my) thoughts, I am under obligation by (my) words, I am under obligation by (my) deeds. O Dâdâr ! I am thankful to Thee, that good times

¹ Avakhshâishnigar. Mr. Ph. Masani adds before it awakshidâr. Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat gives avakhshâishgar.

have arrived. I am thankful, that bad times have not arrived. I am thankful, that from the beginning of the creation till this day,¹ and from to-day till the Resurrection of the future body (tan pasin), the sky has been (and will continue to be) beautiful,² the earth in (its full) width, the river (in its) full length, the Sun high (in the Heavens), waters running, trees growing, the sun shining, the moon brilliant, and the stars in the heavens.

3. O Dâdâr Ahura Mazda ! I am under obligation to Thee with my thoughts, under obligation with my words, under obligation with deeds. O Dâdâr I am under your obligation for this, that you have made me an Air³ (Airyan, Iranian) and a Veh-din (*i.e.* a member of the good Zoroastrian religion) and that you gave me intelligence, and sense, and peace, and light to my eyes, and hands and feet, pleasant food and good apparel, and all these⁴ good things according to my desire. O Dâdâr ! I thank thee from (my) thoughts, words and deeds, every day, a thousand times, thousands of thousand times.

4. O Dâdâr Ahura Mazd ! I am thankful with thoughts, thankful with words, thankful with deeds. O Dâdâr ! I am thankful to thee, that you (*ket*) created me Man by nature (*chihar*) and that you (*o-t*) gave (me the powers of) hearing and speaking and seeing and you created me free (*âzâd*), and not slave and that you created me Male, not female, and that you created me a (silent) eater with the recital of grace (*vâz-khûr*) and not one (eating while) talking.

5. My Adoration to Thee O God ! because I see Thy creations, like the high heavens, like the sun, like the cattle-seeded moon, like the red, burning, brilliant fire, like the glory of a king, prosperous with treasure and wealth, like fertile land, like running (*ravashnimand*) water, like vegetable and wood and trees and valuable (*arzhomand*)⁵ clothes, like a modest, handsome brilliant woman, like a sweet tongue (*hizvân*) that may be liked and adored in an assembly, like pleasant friends and neighbours and nearly-related brethren, like desirable pleasure (and) like one's own (good) thoughts which must be honest, and (like) all thy things which are prosperous, full of

1 Ervad. Antia has Ahura Mazda for im roz, evidently a mistake.

2 Ervad Antia gives Ziya for Zibâ. Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat properly gives zibâ.

3 Ervad Antia has *Haîr* wrongly for Air. Air is for Airya.

4 Antia has nin, miswritten for *va in*. Ph. Masani has *va in*.

5 Darab Hormazdyar's Rivayat gives arzhomand.

advantage and splendour and happiness (khâreh) and good, for which you in this world of righteousness (ashahe-homand) and your assistance are worthy of welcome.

(6) May they (worshippers) have their share of paradise. May immortality reach their souls. May they rest in the brilliant Heaven. May my fathers, mothers, (*i.e.* ancestors), brothers, sisters, near ones and own-ones, (and) co-religionists—all those who may come hereafter or are now existent or are dead—have a share in the Paradise and a share in (the blessings of) this world. May their works and righteousness have their share (of reward) in this world. May all, by virtue of their, (good) thoughts, words and deeds, be on the path of truth and virtue, on the path of good, so that they may be liked by God.”

In the matter of the particular passages, which present parallels to the Chinese, Greek or Jewish desires, we find them repeated in another similar Pazend prayer, known as ‘Ba Nâm-i Yazad’ (*i.e.* in the name of God). Therein, we find the three forms of prayer, not dispersed as in the first prayer but all united in one passage. We read: “Sepâs dâram az Dâdâr-i veh avzûni, ke air ham na an-air, veh-din ham na akdin, mard ham na zan.”*

Translation.—I am thankful to Good Bountiful Dâdâr that I am an Iranian (or Airya) not a non-Iranian, of the Good (Zoroastrian) religion not of (any other) bad religion, a man not a woman.

*Pazend Texts by E. K. Antia, p. 208. Pazend Setâyesh bâ mâeni, by Mr. Pheroze S. Masani, p. 12. Mr. Masani has taken some liberty with the original texts, in this as well as the preceding prayers. He seems to have been influenced by his own personal views, which could have better had an expression in a foot-note. The text has very properly only one form *viz.* “mard ham na zan”, but Mr. Masani, perhaps thinking, that there must be some similar words for a female worshipper, has added alternative words “zan ham na mard.” In doing so, he seems to have missed the very spirit of the prayer, which is seen, as said above, in the parallel passages from the Chinese, Greek and Jewish writings.