

## A FEW PARSEE NĪRANGS (INCANTATIONS OR RELIGIOUS FORMULÆ).

( Read on 27th August 1919. )

### I.

The other day, Thursday, the 14th August 1919, I was hearing at our University (Sir Cowasjee Jehangir) Convocation Hall, one of the interesting and learned Wilson Philological Lectures delivered by our esteemed colleague, Father Zimmermann. While discoursing on the subject of the *Âthrava Veda*, which contains many Vedic incantations, charms, amulets or prayers of exorcism, he said, that the literatures of many ancient nations referred to some kind of charms, amulets, incantations or religious formulæ to keep off or to exorcise evils. He quoted an incantation of that kind from the *Âthrava Veda*, wherein the worshipper asked certain evils to be away, to be off, to be destroyed. That incantation reminded me of a similar incantation in the *Vendidâd* of the Parsis. The next day, or the day after, I drew his attention to an Avesta incantation. Father Zimmermann's above lecture and a further consideration of the matter have suggested to me the subject of this evening's paper. I propose handling, before the Society under the general head of *Nîrangs*, the subject of incantations, charms, amulets, religious formulæ, etc., which were believed by some Parsees, of one age or another, to possess efficacy for the removal of evils, physical or mental.

The English word 'amulet' and its equivalents in other European languages (Lat. *amuletum*, Fr. *amulette*, Span. *amuleto*) came from Arabic *hamâ'il* حمائل which word comes from an Arabic root *haml*, حمل i.e., carrying. Then, it has come to mean "something that you carry over your person with a view to keep off an evil." "A small korân suspended from the neck as a preservative"<sup>1</sup> is spoken of as a *hamâ'il*.

<sup>1</sup> Steingass.

The English word 'talisman' and its equivalents of some other European languages also come from an Arabic word *tilisam* or *tilsam* (طلسم) Gr. *τέλεσμα*. One need not conclude from these words, that the belief in amulets or talisman went to the West from the East, to Europe from Arabia after the Arab conquest of Spain and a great part of Europe. The ancient Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Hebrews and even the early Christians had that belief.

The custom of wearing amulets is said to be "almost as widespread as the human race itself." During the last great war, there fought nations of different grades of civilization. There were soldiers from the countries of the so-called dark continent of Africa as well as soldiers from the so-called highly civilized countries of Europe and America, and as I told the Society at its last monthly meeting, in the great War Exhibitions held in England at Burlington House, there was, what is called "the lighter side" consisting of "the collection of soldiers' and sailors' mascots" of all nations.<sup>1</sup>

It is said on the authority of Mr. Doughty, that in Arabia there is hardly a child or animal which is not defended by some kind of amulets against evil eyes. The ancient Jews believed, that out of every 100 deaths, 99 occurred from evil eyes and only one from natural causes.<sup>2</sup>

In India, women put black marks on the temples of their children, so that the evil eyes of the onlookers may be drawn away to the black spots on the face and not to the face itself. The putting on of ornaments in ancient times is similarly connected with the idea of driving away evil eyes. "In antiquity jewels were worn quite as much for protective as for decorative purposes, being supposed to draw the attention of

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1 "The Folklore" of June 1918 gives a variety of charms and amulets carried over their persons by soldiers and sailors to protect themselves from risks.

2 Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible (1909), p. 29.



the spirit from the wearer.”<sup>1</sup> Even now, we see many an amulet put in in ornamental lockets or in pretty forms of ornament. I remember noticing in Naples, that many a Neapolitan carried over their bodies some things recovered from the ruins of Pompei, set in some ornamental forms, to serve as amulets. Young lovers and beloveds carrying in their ornamental lockets, locks of hair or miniatures of those whom they love or by whom they are loved, remind us that the idea of wearing these lockets and the idea of putting on amulets, may be traced to the same origin. The sight of the lockets and the amulets may arouse in the minds of the wearers certain noble ideals—ideals of pure love, courage, patience, faith in God or some Higher Power—which may bear them up, carry them forward in walks of life, inspire them, and lead them to thoughts of doing some good or of avoiding evil. Though we may be tempted to smile or laugh at some of these old beliefs, yet, when we reflect, that, even at present, in our advanced times, we indulge in some customs and beliefs, which, traced to their origin, point to the same idea, we are led to look at these old beliefs with a kind of toleration and sympathy. As long as they lead those who profess those beliefs to some higher thoughts, we must look at them with sympathy, not only from their standpoint, but from a general standpoint. You and I, we are neither putting on amulets or charms, nor are we going to recommend others to put them on, but when we see others of a different calibre of mind—or even when we see others of the same calibre of mind as ourselves but differing from us in thoughts or views on different occasions—putting on such charms or amulets which bear them up, keep them up, inspire them with higher thoughts for bearing difficulties or for daring deeds, we must look at them with a tolerant and sympathetic eye. Many a soldier in the last war, whose amulets and charms were exhibited in the last War Exhibition in England, must have been soothed at times of pain and difficulties, or encouraged

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<sup>1</sup> Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible (1909), p. 29

in fighting, or even inspired for nobler deeds in his own limited sphere of activity; and thus, he may have done a piece of service to you, to me, and to the country and Empire at large by winning the war. Begging to be excused for this rather long introduction, I now come to the subject proper of my paper.

## II.

The word *nîrang* is originally Pahlavi (نیرنگ), from which it has passed into Persian (نیرنگ). It then passed into Parsi-Gujarati in the same form (नीरंग). It bears various meanings, most of them akin or arising from one original idea. They are the following :—

1. A religious formula or prayer to be recited at the end of some larger prayers. For example, we have the *nîrangs* to be recited after the Yashts.

2. A religious formula to be recited with the performance of a particular little ceremony or ritual. For example, the *nîrang* to be recited early in the morning with the application of cow's urine on the exposed parts of the body.

3. A religious formula to be recited on particular occasions for keeping away ordinary evils—evils both physical and mental.

4. A religious formula to keep away evils coming or proceeding from outside or from other persons, e.g., evil eyes.

5. A religious formula recited with a view to invoke some good or success.

6. At times, the word is used for a ritual itself. For example the whole ritual, wherein the Yaçna, Visparad, Vendidad, etc., are recited to consecrate bull's urine, is called Nîrang-din. Generally speaking, a *nîrang* is a religious formula, intended to bring some good or to keep off some evil from the persons who uses it. Then, the word began to be used for a thing or things, in connection with which the religious formula was recited.



For example, the Parsees even now speak of cow's urine as *nîrang*. The cow's urine is applied to the body with the recital of a *nîrang*, and from this fact, even the religious or technical term for cow's urine is *nîrang*. The special *nîrang* or cow's urine, which is consecrated with a long ceremony lasting for about eighteen days, is spoken of at times as *nîrang-dîn* or more properly *nîrang-i-dîn*, i.e., the *nîrang* or cow's urine consecrated with religious ceremony or ritual.

Looking to the old Iranian literature of different periods, we find that, at first, the *nîrangs* were pure prayer-formulas recited on certain occasions for the removed of certain evils. That being the case, we find the word *nîrang* used in the Pahlavi *Virâf-nâme*<sup>1</sup> with words for other larger liturgical prayers and forms of ceremonies, such as *Yazashna*, *Darun* (*Bâj*), *Âfringân*. Latterly, the *nîrangs* or prayer-formulæ, were accompanied by certain forms and rituals.

The *Virâf-nâme* speaks of the *nîrangs* or religion (*nîrang-i-dînîk*) as having been written both in the *Avesta* and *Zend* (Pahlavi).<sup>2</sup> Most of the *nîrangs* which we have now in the Parsee books as separate pieces of prayer-formulæ are in Pahlavi or Pâzend more akin to Persian. The above referred to passage of the *Virf-nâme* shows, that some *nîrangs* existed even in the *Avesta* language. The Pahlavi *Ghosht-i-Frayâna* also speaks of *Avesta nîrangs*. It refers to such *nîrangs* for killing snakes (*mâr-i-pavan nîrang-i Avestâ barî zektelûnd*).<sup>3</sup> The same book refers to a *nîrang-i dînîk*, which was used with a barsam-cutting<sup>4</sup> knife by *Dastur Gosht-i Frayâna* to destroy *Akht*, a great sorcerer. The Pahlavi *Vendidad*<sup>5</sup> also speaks of such *nîrangs*.

<sup>1</sup> *Virâf-nâme*, Chapter I, 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter, V, 2. *Hoshang-Haug Virâf-nâme*. p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> Barsam-picking or Barsam-gathering knife (*kard-i Barsam-chin-pavau nîrang-i dînîk*). Chapter IV, 27. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> *Pavan denman nîrang min lavîn paitâk barâ Zaktalûnnishn* (Pahlavi *Vendidad* III, 14), i.e. to kill that (*Nasush*) by the *nîrang* mentioned above.

I think, that the word *nîrang* ( نیونگ ) is originally the same in meaning as the word *nîrûk* or *nîrui* ( P. نیرو ) *i.e.*, strength or power. The same Pahlavi form ( 𐬨𐬀𐬭𐬀 ) can be read as *nîrang* and *nîruk*. (Vide Dastur Hoshang's Glossarial Index of the Vendidad, p. 172). The prayer-formulæ, incantations, charms, rituals, etc., were called *nîrang* (*nîrûk*) because they all gave (mental) *strength* or *power* to those who resorted to them.

The *nîrangs* or incantation prayers or religious formulæ of the Parsees may be divided into two Classes of *Nîrangs*. classes: (1) those that are given in their modern prayer books and (2) those that are not given in their prayer books but are found in the later Revâyets and other miscellaneous writings. The first are pure religious formulæ recited with or without other regular Avesta prayers, and with very little or no ritual or form. Some of them may be taken as pure incantations, *i.e.*, pure prayer-formulæ, for the removal or suppression of physical or mental evils, and as such can be recited by any person, even by a person of refined but religious-minded views. The second class of *nîrangs* which are not found in prayer-books, form amulets or charms. They are spoken of as *tâviz* ( تعویذ ) *i.e.*, amulets. They are written on pieces of paper and are kept on the body or applied or used as directed. This second class of *nîrangs* may be divided into various classes.

1. Those that are believed as curatives, *i.e.*, as cures for physical complaints or diseases.

2. Those that are believed as curatives for mental evils which have been already caught, as the result of the influence of demons, sorcerers or evil persons.

3. Those that are believed as mere preventives from all evils, whether physical or mental. They are, as it were, charms of that class, the like of which were found on the bodies of soldiers of all nationalities during the last war and which were exhibited in the War Exhibition above referred to.



To-day, I will speak of the *nîrang*s of the first class, *i.e.*, those that are found in the Khordeh Avesta, the small Avesta which forms the common prayer book of the Parsees. In old Parsee prayer book manuscripts they are given in Avesta characters, with their ritual, here and there, in Persian characters and language.

## III.

Before giving here the *nîrang*s, which are spoken of as *nîrang*s in the books in which they are found, I will give here two Avesta *nîrang*s, which are embodied in the Vendidâd, but which, though not named as such, can be taken to be Avesta *nîrang*s—*nîrang*s of the kind of the Âthrava Veda incantations. The first occurs in the 20th chapter XX, 7, of the Vendidâd, and runs thus :

A *nîrang* from the Vendidâd corresponding to an Âthrava Veda incantation.

دندم دندم دندم . . . . . دندم دندم . . . . . دندم دندم . . . . .

O Sickness ! I tell thee, be gone. O Death ! I tell thee, be gone  
O Pain ! I tell thee, be gone. O Fever ! I tell thee, be gone  
O Sârana (headache) <sup>1</sup> ! I tell thee, be gone. O Sârastya !  
I tell thee, be gone. O Azana ! I tell thee, be gone. O  
Azahva ! I tell thee, be gone. O Kurugha ! I tell thee  
be gone. O Azhivâka ! I tell thee, be gone ! O Duruka, I tell  
thee, be gone. O Astairyâ ! I tell thee, be gone. O Aghashi  
I tell thee, be gone.

The sacred prayer of Kemnâ MazJâ (Vend. VIII, 21) recited several times by the Parsees during the day, while untying and tying their *kusti* (sacred thread) also contains a few sentences which can be taken as another *nîrang* or incantation to keep off evil. It runs thus :

Another Avesta incantation.

دندم دندم دندم . . . . . دندم دندم . . . . .

<sup>1</sup> This and others that follow are various physical and mental diseases, the exact modern equivalents of which it is rather difficult to determine.

*Translation.*

- O Daêva ! Be off.  
 O ye of the seed of the Daêvas ! Be off.  
 O ye shown by the Daevas ! Be off.  
 O Ye following the Daevas ! Be off.  
 O Druj ! Be off.  
 O Druj ! Run away from here.  
 O Djuj ! Run further away from here. Run away to  
 the north.

## IV.

The first thing that an orthodox Parsee had to do on leaving his bed in the morning was to recite an Ashem Vohu (a short prayer in praise of purity and piety) near the bed itself and then to untie and re-tie with the recital of its proper prayer-formula (*nîrang-i kustî*) his sacred thread. The next immediate thing to be done was the application of the cow's or the goat's urine, with the recital of its proper *nîrang* or prayer-formula. The *nîrang* for the application of this Gaomez called Nîrang-i-âb-i zar (نیرنگ آب زر)<sup>1</sup> or Nîrang-i Dast-shoi (بیدرنگ دست شوی).<sup>2</sup>

The urine of a cow is generally spoken of as âb-i-zar, *i.e.*, the golden or the yellow water. It was so called on account of its colour, or perhaps, because its application to the body with its proper prayer-formula was held to be very useful and

<sup>1</sup> Vide Dr. Eugen Wilhelm's paper "On the Use of Beef's Urine, according to the precepts of the Avesta and on Similar Customs with Other Nations," printed and published by Maneckji Barjorji Minocher Homji at the Bombay Samachar Press (1889). Dr. Wilhelm at first discusses the various passages of the Avesta which refer to the use of cows's urine and then gives an account of its use among different nations, by some of whom it is still used as a remedy or purificant.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, the *nîrang* for washing the hands. It has received this alternative or additional name from the fact that it is recited with the application of cow's urine early in the morning before washing one's hands and face.



important from a religious point of view. In the Avesta, (Vend. IX, 14; XIX, 21, 22) it is spoken of as *gao-maêza*

(𐬔𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 Pahl. 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) from *gao* गौ cow and *maêza*

urine (मैत्र) from Av. 𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀 (Pahl. 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 Pers. میزیدن

Sans. (मिह) Lat. *ming-ere*) to sprinkle, to make water. The Parsees generally speak of it as *nîrang*, because it is applied with the recital of a *nîrang* or a prayer-formula. Of all other things connected with the *nîrang*s or the recital of religious formulæ, it is especially called so, because upto a few years ago, its application was general. In the Parsee prayer-books, its prayer-formula was given in the very commencement, after the Ahunavar and Ashem Vohu prayers. All Parsee children were expected to know it by heart. In Bombay, the custom, now-a-days, is not generally observed. But the mofussil Parsees and most of the clergy still observe it. The Avesta speaks only of cow's urine, but now-a-days for ordinary application to the exposed parts of the body early in the morning on leaving bed, even a goat's urine is used, if that of the cow is not available.

I give here the prayer-formula as given in the Avesta characters in Parsee prayer books.<sup>1</sup>

𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀  
 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀  
 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀  
 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀  
 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀 𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀

<sup>1</sup> Vide Khordeh Avesta in Avesta characters by Framji Minocheherji Dastur Jamasp Asajina (1881) p. 10. Vide Spiegel's Khordeh Avesta, translated by Bleek (1864) (Prayer on taking the cow-urine) p. 3.

*Translation.*—May Shaitân be defeated. May Âhriman and his deeds and actions be accursed. May his accursed deeds and actions never reach me. May thirty-three Aneshasparads (and) Dâdâr Ahura Mazda, (who is always) victorious and holy, come to my help.

The language and the contents of this prayer-formula show it to be a much later composition. The language is Persian. The use of the word Shaitân (شیطان Satan) a later form of Shêdâân (𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀) also points to a very late composition of the prayer-formula. Again, when we know, that according to the Avesta and Pahlavi writings, the Ameshâspantas are always known to be seven (including Ahura Mazda himself), this *nîrang* speaks of their number as thirty-three, mixing them up with the thirty-three Yazatas.

As to how the urine may be applied to the different exposed portions of the body, later ritualistic writings give injunctions as follows:—The gâomez or *nîrang* is first to be held in the hollow of the hand, and then the *nîrang* (the above Persian prayer-formula) is to be recited. Then the Srosh-Bâj is to be recited, wherein, with the recital of the first Ahunavar or Yathâ Ahû Vairyô, it is to be applied on the right hand; with the recital of the second on the left hand; with that of the third on the face, with that of the fourth on the right foot; and with the recital of the last or the fifth Ahunavar on the left foot. The Srosh-Baj is then to be finished and then the hands and face may be washed with water. It is only after the observance of this ritual that an orthodox Parsee can touch other utensils and things.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We see from the *nîrang* itself, that there is no mention of the cow's urine in it. A Zoroastrian is asked in the Vendidâd, to be up from his bed with the crowing of the cock, to wash his face, and to kindle the fire of the family hearth, which was covered over with ashes at the close of the previous night before going to bed. The washing of the face is to be preceded with an application of cow's urine which was held in ancient Iran to be a purifier. In the *nîrang*, the worshipper prays



The *nîrang* or prayer-formula given in the prayer-books next to that of the *nîrang-i-ab-i-zar* is the *Nîrang-i-Nîrang-i. Kusti* Kusti, *i.e.*, the prayer-formula for putting on the sacred shirt.<sup>1</sup> It is ordinarily known as Ahura Mazda Khudâe prayer and is held to be the most important prayer by the Parsees, because it is the prayer, which a Zoroastrian child has, next to *Yathâ Ahû Vairyô* and *Ashem Vohû* prayers, to learn by heart before being admitted into the fold, with the investiture of the sacred shirt and thread (sudreh kûsti), and which every Parsee has to recite while tying and untying his sacred thread several times during the day. It is spoken of as a *nîrang* (नेरंग or नीरंग कुस्ती बांधवाणी).<sup>2</sup> In the Pazend Text, <sup>3</sup> it is spoken of as *nîrang-kûsti bastan* (نیرنگ کستی بستن) *i.e.*, the *nîrang* of putting on kusti.

I give below this *Nîrang-i-kusti* with its translation.

(نیرنگ کستی بستن) - - - (نیرنگ کستی بستن) - - -

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بسن (نیرنگ کستی بستن) - - - (نیرنگ کستی بستن) - - -

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to exorcise or to keep away Ahriman and his deeds and actions. In this connection one may notice that ghosts that hover over this earth, are according to the Parsee belief, generally the participants of Ahriman or the Evil Spirit, and it was, and, to a certain extent, it is even now, believed that in your night travels, if you are overtaken by a ghost, the efficacious remedy is to make water immediately. The urine which you pass will drive away the ghosts. It is believed, that when one is overtaken by a ghost at night while travelling, he loses his way, or finds himself returning to the same spot which he had once passed over, or he is disturbed in his march by a clapping of hands as if somebody behind was calling him and on looking back finds nobody there. Next to passing urine, it is the crowing of a cock that drives away a ghost—a common belief, of which we are reminded by Horatio in Shakespeare's play of Hamlet.

1 *Vide* Spiegel's *Khordeh Avesta*, translated by Bleek (1864) p. 4.

2 *Khordeh Avesta in Avesta characters*, by Framji Minocherjee Dastur (1181) p. 2.; *Khordeh Avesta bâ mâinî*, by Behedin Hormusji Muncherjee (1863), p. 2; *Khordeh Avesta bâ mâinî*, by Bhedin Dadabhoy Sorabjee (1845), p. 2.

3 The Pazend Texts by Ervad Edalji Antia (1909), p. 164.





*Translation*—Ahura Mazda (is) God. May Âhriman, the powerless, the keeper-off (of good), be smitten and defeated. May Âhriman, the Daêvas, the Drujs (the laying spirits), the magicians, the Dravants (vagrants), the Kiks (the seeing-blind), the Karafs (the hearing-deafs), the oppressors, the sinners, the Âshmogs (the back-biters), the Dravants, the enemies, the (evil) fairies be smitten and defeated. May evil-rulers be powerless. May enemies be subdued. May enemies be powerless. Ahura Mazda is God. I repent of all sins. I repent of all bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds, which I may have thought or said, or done in this world, which I may have sought, which I may have begun. O Lord! I repent of all such sins with my thoughts, words and deeds (whether the sins may be) of body or of soul, (whether they be in connection with the thoughts) of this corporeal world or the next spiritual world. I repent of all these with three-fold words. Rejoiced be Ahura Mazda! Condemned be Âhriman. The wish of those who work for truth is the best wish. I praise Righteousness.

Nirang-i Ahura Mazda Yasht <sup>1</sup> or Nirang-i Yâ Dâ-dâri.<sup>2</sup> The recital of the Ahura Mazda Yasht (Yt. I) is followed by the recital of the following *nirang*.

𐬨𐬀𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬀𐬎𐬀𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬎𐬀  
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*Translation*—O Dâdâr Ormazd! May I subdue Âhriman, the destroyer, and the Devs. I undoubtedly believe in the occurrence of the Resurrection (Rastâkhiz) and Future Existence (tan-pasin), Ashem Vohû.

<sup>1</sup> Spiegel, Khordeh Avesta, translated by Vleeck, p. 190. "Prayer after reading the Ormazd-Yasht.

<sup>2</sup> The second name here and that in the next *nirang* are derived from the preliminary words of the *nirang*.

I may say here that in the recital of the *nîrang*s, wherever the word or words for Âhriman, the Devs, the diseases, or the evil whose exorcism or obstruction is sought for, occur, the worshipper symbolizes or emphasises his expression of hatred by clapping his thumb with the third or middle finger of his right hand,—a process known as *tachâkri fodvi*.

The Ardibehesht Yasht (Yt. III), as now recited, ends with a *nîrang*. The contents of the whole of the Ardibehesht Yasht may be said to be full of incantations for the removal of physical and mental diseases. Upto a few years ago, and even now to some extent, the Ardibehesht Yasht is recited by a priest before a sick person.<sup>1</sup> At times, fire is kept burning before the patient at the time. Ardibehesht is Avesta Asha-vahishta, *i.e.*, the best purity. Fire is the best type of purity. It purifies all impurities. In later Avestan hierarchy, fire is as much associated with Ardibehesht as with Âdar, the fire-Yazata proper. Fire-temples are generally consecrated on the day Âdar or on the day Ardibehesht. While reciting the Ardibehesht Yasht over a patient, the priest passes a handkerchief over his body. He, as it were, makes passes over his body exorcising the illness with each pass.

The Ardibehesht Yasht speaks of five kinds of physicians, *viz.*, (1) one who cures with his *asha* or righteousness (*asho-baêshaza*), (2) one who cures by doing justice (*dâto-baêshaza*), (3) one who cures by surgical instruments (*karêto-baêshaza*), (4) one who cures with drugs (*urvara-baêshaza*) and (5) one who cures by *mânthra* or recital of holy texts (*mânthra-baêshaza*). Of these five, the *mânthra-baêshaza*, *i.e.*, the physician who cures by *mânthra* (Sans. मन्त्र), is spoken of as the best. His way of curing is very efficacious. It is a kind of faith cure. This treatment

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* my paper "Bombay, as seen by Dr. Edward Ives in the year 1754, (J. B. B. R. A. S. Vol. XXII, p. 279-80)." What Dr. Ives refers to in his account is the case of the recital of the Ardibehesht Yasht over a patient.



is spoken of as Ardibehesh Yasht *ni pichi* (અર્દીબેહેશ્ત યશ્ત ની પીચી). The word *pichi* comes from *pichh* (પીચ) *i.e.*, a feather. It seems that feathers of birds were used to make passes over the patients during the recital of incantations among other communities. When the custom of making passes was introduced among the Parsees, though the Parsee priest used his handkerchief for making passes over the patient, the foreign word 'pichhi,' (feather) came into use with the custom. I have more than once seen the Ardibehesht Yasht recited over a patient but have never seen the use of feathers.

Before giving the *nîrang* proper of the Ardibehesht Yasht, I will give here some of the passages of the Yasht itself, to give one an idea, as to how the recital of the Yasht is properly taken to be a kind of faith-cure. Many evils, both physical and mental, are mentioned, and their removal or exorcism is prayed for. The rythmical language itself of the Yasht is charming and is likely to work as a soothing 'charm' on receptive minds. The translation cannot give a sufficiently good idea of the effect of the language as a *mânthra* or *mantra*. The whole of the Yasht is full of such language but I give here only a typical passage.

Yaçka apa-dvarata.

Mahrka apa-dvarata,

Daêva apa-dvarata.

Paityâr apa-dvarata.

Ashêmaogho anashava apa-dvarata, etc., etc.

*Translation.*

O Diseases! May you be off.

O Death! May you be off.

O Devs! May you be off.

O Opponents! May you be off.

O Unholy Ashmôg (quarrel-producer)! May you be off.

O Tyrants! May you be off.

In the same strain of language, evils coming from snakes and wolves,<sup>1</sup> from unruly, arrogant, hot-tempered, backbiting enemies, evil-eyed and untruthful persons and magic-practising unglorious women and from sickly northern winds are prayed to be away. Then follow a repetition of a similar incantation where instead of the oft-repeated words “apa-dvarata” (may you be off), we have the word *jainti* (strike), meaning, that Ardibehesht strifes all the above complaints. Then again, the same kind of incantation is repeated with the word *janât* (will strike), meaning that Ardibehesht will strike all the above evils.

Now, I will give here, the *nîrang* proper of the Ardibehesht Yasht.

𐬰𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀

𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀  
 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀 𐬵𐬀 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬵𐬀

<sup>1</sup> Here snakes and wolves may be taken figuratively.





١. ٢. ٣. ٤. ٥. ٦. ٧. ٨. ٩. ١٠. ١١. ١٢. ١٣. ١٤. ١٥. ١٦. ١٧. ١٨. ١٩. ٢٠. ٢١. ٢٢. ٢٣. ٢٤. ٢٥. ٢٦. ٢٧. ٢٨. ٢٩. ٣٠. ٣١. ٣٢. ٣٣. ٣٤. ٣٥. ٣٦. ٣٧. ٣٨. ٣٩. ٤٠. ٤١. ٤٢. ٤٣. ٤٤. ٤٥. ٤٦. ٤٧. ٤٨. ٤٩. ٥٠. ٥١. ٥٢. ٥٣. ٥٤. ٥٥. ٥٦. ٥٧. ٥٨. ٥٩. ٦٠. ٦١. ٦٢. ٦٣. ٦٤. ٦٥. ٦٦. ٦٧. ٦٨. ٦٩. ٧٠. ٧١. ٧٢. ٧٣. ٧٤. ٧٥. ٧٦. ٧٧. ٧٨. ٧٩. ٨٠. ٨١. ٨٢. ٨٣. ٨٤. ٨٥. ٨٦. ٨٧. ٨٨. ٨٩. ٩٠. ٩١. ٩٢. ٩٣. ٩٤. ٩٥. ٩٦. ٩٧. ٩٨. ٩٩. ١٠٠.

*Translation.*—May the splendour and the glory of the holy Sraosha, increase! May he be powerful and victorious! He is the helper of the souls (of men). He is the protector of the bodies (of men). He is holy among the holies and is a guardian. For days and nights and months, may there be the protection of Sraosha Yazad over all the Iranians, and the Paoiryôtakaêshâns of the worldly creation, and over the faithful followers of the religion, over the Tâzis who have put on the *kûsti*, the Zoroastrians, the virtuous, and the pious of all the seven regions. May there be the protection of Sarosh Yazata.

Nirangh-i Sarosh          The Nirang-i Sarosh          Hâdokht run  
 Hâdokht.                    as follows :—

١. ٢. ٣. ٤. ٥. ٦. ٧. ٨. ٩. ١٠. ١١. ١٢. ١٣. ١٤. ١٥. ١٦. ١٧. ١٨. ١٩. ٢٠. ٢١. ٢٢. ٢٣. ٢٤. ٢٥. ٢٦. ٢٧. ٢٨. ٢٩. ٣٠. ٣١. ٣٢. ٣٣. ٣٤. ٣٥. ٣٦. ٣٧. ٣٨. ٣٩. ٤٠. ٤١. ٤٢. ٤٣. ٤٤. ٤٥. ٤٦. ٤٧. ٤٨. ٤٩. ٥٠. ٥١. ٥٢. ٥٣. ٥٤. ٥٥. ٥٦. ٥٧. ٥٨. ٥٩. ٦٠. ٦١. ٦٢. ٦٣. ٦٤. ٦٥. ٦٦. ٦٧. ٦٨. ٦٩. ٧٠. ٧١. ٧٢. ٧٣. ٧٤. ٧٥. ٧٦. ٧٧. ٧٨. ٧٩. ٨٠. ٨١. ٨٢. ٨٣. ٨٤. ٨٥. ٨٦. ٨٧. ٨٨. ٨٩. ٩٠. ٩١. ٩٢. ٩٣. ٩٤. ٩٥. ٩٦. ٩٧. ٩٨. ٩٩. ١٠٠.



دسداشا . د . وسه پوز . د . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 [سداشا]

*Translation.*—May the splendour and the glory of Sraosha, (who is) Holy, powerful, controller of body, possessor of wonderful weapons, of victorious weapons, the guide of the creation of Dâdâr Ahura Mazda, increase! May he come to our help! May it be so!

Nirang-i Hom The Nirang of the Yasht in honour of  
 Yasht.1 Haoma runs as follows:—

و د سداشا . د . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا . دسداشا .  
 (1)

*Translation.*—O ye Devs, Drujs, Magicians, Fairies! May I destroy, may I smite,<sup>2</sup> may I subdue<sup>3</sup> your bodies, by means of the Haoma, and the Barsam and by means of the true, righteous and good religion which Dâdâr Ahura Mazda has taught to me.

1 Spiegel. Kordeh Avesta, translated by Bleeck, p. 190 LXV. Prayer for driving away the devil.

2 From Av. . دسداشا Pahl. . دسداشا Sans. वन to win, to strike.

3 . دسداشا Pers. نزار weak, distressed, emaciated.

Nirang-i Vanant The Nirang in honour of the Yazata  
Yasht. presiding over the star Vanant, runs thus :—

و کز . اندکست . و دلبر . و دزدان . و کلاه . و پهلوان .  
 و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان .  
 و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان .  
 و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان .  
 و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان .  
 و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان . و پهلوان .

Translation.—May there perish all calamities ; and may Devs, Drujs, Fairies, despoilers of the dead,<sup>1</sup> magicians,<sup>2</sup> injurious<sup>3</sup> winds, filths,<sup>4</sup> the pain in the belly and in the seven limbs of the body, the harm proceeding from Shaitân (Satan), distress of mind, the disease of the brain resulting from the mind of the Shaitân (may all this) be scattered away (*i.e.*, destroyed)<sup>5</sup> and the harm<sup>6</sup> in sight which results from an evil<sup>7</sup> eye and such other calamities may perish.

In the recital of the Vanant Yasht itself in some places, here the name of Ahriman has to be mentioned, the recital is emphasized by a clapping of hands, intended perhaps to emphasize his exorcism.

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1 Pers. کفکار 2 Arab. سحر magic. 3 Av. دزدان filthiness Pahl. دزدان P. آذو 4 Arab. خ dust, filth.  
 5 P. پوریشان 6 Av. دادر San. विज to afflict, to do harm  
 7 Perhaps from Arab نجسی dirty.