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THE ANCIENT PERSIAN DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE LIFE.

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I. Introduction—The doctrine of a future life among ancient nations—Sources of our information in regard to the ancient Persian view.—II. From death to the individual judgment—The soul after death—Allusions—Chinvat bridge—Accounting—Life book—Weighing—The judges—Pangs of conscience—Passage over the bridge—Stages to Heaven or Garōdemāna “house of song”—Heaven according to the ancient Persian view—Grades to Hell, or Drujōdemāna “house of fiend”; or Duzhanha, evil life—Hell according to the ancient Persian idea—Hamistakan, the “ever stationary.”—III. General judgment—End of world—Coming of the Saoshyant, saviour—Resurrection and judgment—Final end of world—The Vidāiti and new dispensation.—IV. Conclusion—Striking resemblance between the ancient Persian views in regard to a future life and those of Judaism and Christianity.

Among all the nations of mankind that have cherished the spark of religious faith, that ember has kindled into a beacon flame, pointing onward to a world beyond the present, and to a life, whatever its character, existing beyond the grave. The rude savage bears witness to this truth, as well as those great spirits of classical antiquity, Socrates, Plato, Cato, Cicero; the ancient Egyptians and Hindus, the early Celts and Germans, bear testimony, as well as those who have received the blessed light of revelation. But among the nations of antiquity outside the light of biblical revelation, this feeling seems to have stirred in the hearts of none more strongly than it stirred in the hearts of the ancient Persians, those natives of old Iran, the worshipers of Ormazd and followers of Zoroaster, the prophet who spoke at least six centuries before the Saviour came preaching the truth. The confident belief that the good will be rewarded after this life and the wicked will be punished; that right will
triumph and evil will be destroyed; that the dead shall arise and live again; that the world shall be restored and joy and happiness shall reign supreme — this is a strain that runs through all the writings of Zoroastrianism for hundreds of years, or from a time before the Jews were carried up into captivity at Babylon until after the Koran of Mohammed and the sword of the Arabs had changed the whole religious history of Iran.

It is with reference to this doctrine of a future life for the immortal soul, and in respect to the views relating to eschatology, that there is a most striking likeness between the religion of ancient Iran, as modified by Zoroaster, and the teachings of Christianity. The firm belief in a life hereafter, the optimistic hope of a regeneration of the present world and of a general resurrection of the dead, are characteristic articles in the faith of Persia in antiquity. The pious expectation of a new order of things is the chord upon which Zoroaster rings constant changes in the Gāthās or Psalms. A mighty crisis is impending; every man ought to choose the right and seek for the ideal state; mankind shall then become perfect and the world renovated (*frashem ahūm, frashōtema, frashēkereti*, etc.). This will be the establishment of the power and dominion of good over evil, the beginning of the true rule and sovereignty, “the good kingdom, the wished-for kingdom” (*vohu khshathra, khshathra vairya*). It is then that the resurrection of the dead will take place. This will be followed by a general judgment, accompanied by a flood of molten metal in which the wicked shall be punished, the righteous cleansed, and evil banished from the earth. So much by way of introduction.

Before turning to the sacred books of Iran itself, it may be well to cite the testimony of early Greek writers in regard to the Persian faith in their own time. The contemporaneous statements of these writers prove the existence of the Iranian belief in a resurrection of the body, a restoration of the world, and a life everlasting. It was this doctrine of a bodily resurrection, quite foreign to Greek idea, however strong might be the belief in immortality, that forms a cardinal tenet in the Magian faith. Let us listen for a moment to what Theopompus
(end of the fourth century B.C.), as quoted by Diogenes Laertes (Proem., p. 2), can tell us: "In the eighth book of the Philippics, Theopompus says that, according to the Magi, men shall come to life again and will become immortal, and all things will continue to exist in consequence of their invocations." And Diogenes adds that Eudemus of Rhodes gives the same testimony. The authority of Theopompus is cited again by Æneas of Gaza (Dial. de animi immort., p. 77) to show that Zoroaster had already preached the resurrection doctrine. "Zoroaster," he says, "preaches that a time shall come when there will be a resurrection (dviraoat) of all the dead." The great biographer, Plutarch, also mentions Theopompus upon this article of the Magian creed. In his Isis and Osiris (ch. 47) he describes a coming millennium and restoration of the world, when the devil, Ahriman, shall be destroyed, and evil will utterly perish from the world, the rough ways be made smooth, and the earth will become a plain; there will be one life and one community of the blessed, and one universal language of all mankind. This is nothing else than a description of the new dispensation (vidâiti division) which Zoroaster teaches in the Gathas. The whole passage is exactly in the spirit of the Avesta, and is precisely parallel with the tone of the famous chapter in the Bundahishn, which is quoted below. This corroborative evidence deduced from Theopompus takes us back four centuries before the Christian era. In a passage in Herodotus, moreover, we can perhaps go back to the fifth century for an allusion to the Persian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead (cf. Hdt., 3, 62).

Such are the important Greek statements that may be quoted on the subject. Turning from these indirect sources to direct Iranian authority we have the testimony of the Avesta and of the traditional literature of the Parsis as witness. These go hand in hand with the classics and testify to the antiquity of the belief. The Avesta, or sacred book of the Parsis, holds the same position in Zoroastrianism as the Holy Scriptures in Christianity; it is supplemented by the Pahlavi Books, or religious writings of Sasanian Persia, which answer in part to the
writings of the Church Fathers. From the ancient Persian inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings we naturally could not expect to receive any specific knowledge on this subject, as their formal and official character would preclude it. The Avesta is therefore both our oldest and our most immediate source of information on the topic. Three of its books or divisions are of special import in the present connection: They are, first, the *Yasna*, or book of the ritual; second, the *Yashts*, or heroic hymns of religious praise; third, the *Vendidad*, an Iranian Pentateuch. Among the Pahlavi writings, most important are the *Bundahishn*, a sort of Iranian Genesis and Revelation, based upon the ancient “Damdāt Nask” of Zoroaster; second, the theological treatises, *Dātistān-i Dēnḡ*, “religious opinions;” *Dēnkart*, “acts of the religion;” *Dinā-i Mainōg-i Khūrat*, “opinions of the spirit of wisdom;” and, finally, the *Artā-Virāf Nāmāk*, a Persian apocalypse or Dantesque vision of heaven and of hell, seen by the saint Arta Viraf.

As to dates, different periods of composition must be recognized. Some portions of the sacred canon of the Avesta are older than others. The *Gāthās* or Psalms of Zoroaster, inserted in the midst of the book of the Yasna, are the oldest portion. They are the sayings, metrical sermons or Psalms of the Prophet himself, and in point of time they undoubtedly represent the period of the fifth or sixth century before Christ. Other parts of the Avesta, like certain young pieces in the Vendidad or formulaic repetitions in the Yasna which are easily recognized as more recent, may be as late as the Christian era. But the great body of the Avesta is pre-Christian in material and in composition, if not in point of redaction. Metrical passages as a rule are antique. The time of the Pahlavi literature covers a period between the fourth and the ninth centuries of our era; this does not preclude the antiquity of some of the matter, much of which is based upon texts that antedate the first Christian years by several centuries. An example in point is the relation of the Bun-

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1 I must here observe that I do not regard the views of the late lamented scholar, Darmesteter, as expressed in *Le Zend-Avesta*, Vol. III, Introduction, respecting the late origin of the Gathas, as tenable; nor have they met with general approval or acceptance among Iranists.
dahishn to the Damdat Nask and of other portions of the literature founded upon lost original Nasks.

The views with respect to a future life are not complete in the Gathas themselves, owing to the limited extent of this psalter portion of the Avesta. The compass of these versified utterances, dogmas and preachings of the Reformer, is less in extent than the direct words of Christ, but their spirit pervades the other parts of the Avesta and extends to the Pahlavi writings, as our Lord's teachings inspire all portions of the New Testament and are reflected in the patristic literature.

In the detailed discussion of the present subject references will accordingly be generally given in the following order: (1) Gatha Avesta, (2) Younger Avesta, (3) Pahlavi and other sources. But in the first half of the paper the references are reduced to a minimum, as a fuller number may easily be collected by any attentive reader of Zoroastrian literature. In the treatment of the topic, two divisions may logically be made, the first dealing with the fate of the individual soul from death to judgment, the second dealing with the general judgment, eschatology and the end of the world.

As the fate of the soul from death to judgment is a favorite theme to dwell upon, dozens of references are found in the Avesta and Pahlavi books alluding to the journey of the spirit from earth to the world beyond this life. A perfect picture of the general belief can be obtained only by giving many quotations and citations from the texts, but there is not space here. We must content ourselves with the merest outline based upon an exhaustive collection of passages and must emphasize only the most important. Several explicit descriptions, full of vivid imaginings, have been preserved as to how the spirit of the righteous or of the wicked, as the case may be, is believed to linger about the body, in joy or in pangs, for three days and three nights after death. At the dawn of the fourth day the soul awakens to consciousness of the new life amid a breath of balmy wind fragrant with scents and perfumes, or in the face of a foul, chill blast heavy with sickening stench. According to a graphic
image, the Conscience, or Religion personified, then appears before the dead, either in the form of a beautiful maiden or in the shape of a hideous hag, being the reflection of his own soul, and this image advances with him to the destined end. In some instances two dogs, guarding the soul from demons, accompany the figure of the maid. This latter seems to be a refracimento of an old Aryan belief. The soul now stands at the individual judgment in the presence of three angels, Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu, the assessors before whom the life account is rendered, and the good and bad deeds are weighed in the balance. According to the turn of these scales, which are counterpoised with perfect justice, the final decision is made.

Next comes the crossing of the Chinvat Bridge of judgment, which stretches over Hell between the divine Mount Alborz and the Peak of Judgment. This bridge plays an important rôle throughout all ages of Zoroastrianism. Across it the righteous and the wicked alike must pass; the one to felicity, the other to damnation; the former with the assistance of ministering angels, or guided by the conscience-maiden as some accounts describe; the latter amid the howls of demons and tormenting fiends, or led by the horrid hag. The difficulties of the passage over this terrible bridge of death are often enough alluded to and dilated upon, from the Gathas down to the latest Persian religious writings. The orthodox doctrine teaches that this bridge becomes broad or narrow according to the nature of the soul upon it; and in some late accounts the bridge is described under the guise of a beam that turns various sides according to the doom of the spirit which crosses it, presenting now to the righteous a pathway “nine javelins” or a “league” in breadth, or again presenting to the wicked an edge like “the thinness of the edge of a razor,” so that the lost soul falls off when half way across, into the depths of Hell.

As the spirit-journey is further pursued, the mansions of the paradise of Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds, in the regions respectively of the stars, the moon, and the sun, are described. The description is only less brilliant in its coloring

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1 Cf. Dāt. 1 Dēn. 21, 2–8; Mkh. 2, 123, Art. Vf. 5, 1.
than the entry into the place of "Eternal Light," the blissful Garonmāna or "house of song," "the abode of Good Thought" (the archangel), "the Best World," the heaven "where Ormazd dwells in joy." But offsetting this, is the painful descent through the grades of Evil Thought, Evil Words, Evil Deeds, to the hell of darkness that can be seized by the hand, a place so foul, so gloomy and so lonesome that although the suffering souls be as many and as close together "as the hairs on the mane of a horse," still each one thinks he is alone (AV. 54, 5-8; Bd. 18, 47); this scene of frightful torment is "the house of Falsehood," "the home of Worst Thought," "the Worst Life." With perfect logic, moreover, the religion taught the existence of a third place suited to the special cases in which the good and the bad deeds exactly counterbalanced. This is the Hamistakān, "the ever-stationary or equilibrium," an intermediate place between earth and the star-region, somewhat resembling a purgatory in which the soul is destined to suffer no other torment than the changes of heat and cold of the seasons, and must there abide awaiting the general resurrection and final judgment day.

All these ideas, so cursorily touched upon here, are clearly to be recognized in the Zoroastrian books and they each have their prototypes in the Gathas. But passing over these with this sketch so hasty that not even references can be presented, attention may be given with more detail to the second half of the subject, the ancient Persian doctrine of eschatology, a millennium, a resurrection, the coming of a Saoshyant or Saviour, the punishment of the wicked in a flood of molten metal, and the establishment of a kingdom or sovereignty of good which is to be the regeneration of the world.

Notice has already been taken of the oft-recurring expression of pious hope in the Gathas of Zoroaster for the coming of a new order of things at the great crisis or final change of the world. This final change is to be the beginning of the wished-
for kingdom or good sovereignty,\footnote{Cf. Av. \textit{khshathra} “kingdom,” \textit{passim}.} and of a regeneration of the world.\footnote{Cf. Ys. \textit{30}, 9, \textit{frash\={e}m} \textit{kere\={n}\={a}un ah\={u}m}; Ys. \textit{46}, 19; \textit{50}, 11, \textit{frash\={o}ket\={e}ma}, and Yt. \textit{19}, 11, 89 \textit{seq.}} This is the \textit{frash\={o}kereti}, as it is elsewhere called in the Avesta,\footnote{See Ys. \textit{62}, 3; Vd. \textit{18}, 31; Yt. \textit{13}, 58.} the \textit{frashakart}, as it repeatedly appears in Pahlavi, in other words “the renovation, perfection, preparation for eternity,” accompanied by the purifying ordeal of molten metal.\footnote{Cf. Ys. \textit{51}, 9; Vp. \textit{20}, 1; Yt. \textit{17}, 20; Bd. \textit{30}, 20, \textit{et al.}}

This Gatha doctrine of a renovation, \textit{frash\={e}m ah\={u}m} the renewed world, as found likewise in the Avestan \textit{frash\={o}kereti} and Pahlavi \textit{frashakart} is a distinctly millennial doctrine and is closely associated with the general belief in the appearance of a Saviour and the resurrection of the dead. The doctrine of the thousand years—a belief parallel in a measure with ideas found in the Book of Revelation—is unquestionably an old article in the Zoroastrian creed, although it first appears elaborated in the Pahlavi writings.\footnote{See in Pahlavi, Bd. \textit{30}, 2 (in which connection it is to be recalled that the Bundahishn is based upon the original Damdat Nask), and consult Bd. \textit{34}, 1 \textit{seq.}; Zsp. 1, 10; Bty. 1, 5; 2, 22; 3, 9: Dk. Den. \textit{37}, 11, 33; \textit{64}, 4; 66, 10; \textit{90}, 7; Dk. \textit{6}, etc., \textit{8}, 14, 10–14.} It is fully recognized as Magian as early as the fourth century before Christ, by Theopompus,\footnote{See Plutarch, \textit{Is. and Os.} 47.} and his statements are in exact agreement with the traditional literature of the Parsis. According to this literature, a period of 12,000 years is the length of the world’s duration, and in the last 3000 years of this aeon occur the millenniums of Aushetar and Aushetar-mah.\footnote{Pahlavi Bd. \textit{30}, 2, 3; \textit{32}, 8; \textit{34}, 2, \textit{etc.}; Dk. \textit{8}, 14, 10–15; \textit{9}, 41, 4–8.} These names are found in the Avesta (Yt. \textit{13}, 128) as Ukhshyat-ereta; Ukhshyat-nemah, sons miraculously born, at the end of time, of the seed of Zoroaster, the heralds and forerunners of the \textit{Saoshyant} Saviour.

The development of the Persian idea of a Saviour is an interesting one to trace. The term Av. \textit{saoshy\={a}nt}, Phl. \textit{s\={o}sh\={a}ns} occurs throughout the entire literature, Gathas, Younger Avesta, Pahlavi, but it seems to have different shadings of meaning according to the circumstances under which it is employed, and it
shows perhaps a growth. In form the word is a future active participle from the root sū “to swell, increase, benefit, save”—a word connoting the highest degree of sanctity. The term saoshyanț is employed to denote (1) priest, apostle, saint of the faith,¹ and is so used both in Gatha and in Younger Avestan, being found oftenest in the plural; second (2) it marks especially those holy men who have lived or who will be born, who are to appear in a goodly company at the millennium and lend their aid in renovating the world; third (3) it designates in particular the Saoshyant supreme, their leader, the last of the three miraculously born posthumous sons of Zoroaster, the great apostle who will preside at the general resurrection.

A question may arise as to whether the Saviour-idea in Mazdaism was a tenet that was taught by Zoroaster himself, or whether it may not possibly be due to some influence of the Messianic idea in Judaism. The answer is not at once to be given. The Apocryphal New Testament of the Bible, Infancy iii., 1–10, expressly states that the Magi who came to worship before the new-born Saviour, came in accordance with a prophecy uttered long before by Zoroaster. A similar assertion is made in a Syriac MS. commentary on Matt. 2:1, by 'Ishōdad of Hadatha in the ninth century of our era. A metrical fragment of the Avesta (Frag. 4, 1–4), an extract from Yasht 13, 89 seq., and the well-known passage in the Bundahishn believed to be founded on the Dāmdāt Nask (Bd. 30, 1 seq.), all lend their weight in ascribing this particular teaching to Zoroaster himself. The whole system of the faith appears to be built upon this tenet. To cite from the Gathas, it certainly seems in one passage, Ys. 46, 3, as if the use of saoshyāntām, in the special connection in which it is used by Zoroaster, did imply the existence and recognition of the belief in the Saoshyant and his company of apostles.² See also Ys. 9, 1–2. In Ys. 48, 9 saoshyās may possibly be employed by Zoroaster with a feeling that he himself was the grand apostle of Ahura Mazda. The distinction

¹Cf. Ys. 48, 9; Yt. 11, 17, 22; Vp. 11, 13, 20; Vp. 5, 1; Ys. 14, 1; 70, 4, and consult Darmesteter Le Zend-Avesta, i, p. 85.

²And that too, in spite of such passages as Ys. 14, 1; Yt. 11, 17, 22.
between the use of the word in the singular and in the plural should in any case be marked. At all events, there can be no doubt on one point, the Saoshyant doctrine in Zoroastrianism is pre-Christian as is shown by its occurrence in metrical compositions.

The great Saoshyant (Saviour) who is to appear at the end of time is the son of the maid Eredat-fedhri Vispa-taurvairi "the all-conquering." It is believed that he will be conceived in a supernatural manner by a virgin bathing in the waters of Lake Kansavaya. In an Avestan prose passage (Yt. 13, 129) his name is called the Victorious (verethrajan), Righteousness Incarnate (astvat-ereta), and the Benefactor or Saviour (saoshyant). The Avestan text itself etymologizes the titles and shows the connection with the resurrection (Yt. 13, 128–129 in prose):

"We worship the guardian spirit (fravashi) of the righteous Astvat-ereta who shall be the Victorious Saoshyant (Benefactor, Saviour) by name, Astvat-ereta (Incarnate Righteousness) by name. He shall be called 'Benefactor, Saviour' (sao-sh-yañt) because he will 'benefit, save' (sava-ya-t) all the incarnate world. He shall be called 'Incarnate Righteousness' (astvat-ereta) because being 'incarnate,' endowed with vital power, he will acquire incarnate incorruptibility for withstanding the Fiend (Druj) with her two-footed brood, and for withstanding the malice done by the righteous."

In the old metrical stanzas of the Zāmyat Yasht (Yt. 19, 89 seq.) the idea is even more elaborately developed in verse. A rendering of the passage is here attempted so as to convey a more exact impression than a mere description can do.

"We worship the mighty Kingly Glory which shall attend upon

89. "The Victorious One of the Saoshyants,
And attend his other comrades,
When He makes the world perfected
Ever ageless and undying,
Undecaying, ne'er corrupting,
Ever living, e'er increasing, ruling at will,
When the dead again shall rise up,
When the quick become immortal,
And, as wished, the world made perfect.

1 Cf. Yt. 19, 92; Frag. 4, 1–4; Ys. 9, 1–2.
2 Yt. 13, 142, 19, 92; Cf. Dk. 7, et al.
3 Yt. 13, 62; 19, 66, 92; Vd. 19, 5, et al.
90. "Then all beings become undying,
Happy creatures, they the Righteous;  
And away the Druj (Fiend) vanish
Thither whence she came destroying
The righteous man, both seed and life.
She the Deadly Fiend shall perish
And the Deadly Lord (Ahriman) shall vanish.

92. "When arise shall Astvat-ereta
From the waters of Kansavya,
Ally of Ahura Mazda,
Offspring of Vispa-taurvairi,
Scion sprung from seed victorious.

94. "He shall look with eye of Wisdom,
Beaming look upon all creatures,
Those of evil brood excepted.
He on all the world incarnate
Beaming looks with eye of Plenty,
And his glance shall make immortal
Each incarnate living creature.

95. "Then, behold, advance the comrades
Of Victorious Astvat-ereta,
Thinking good and but good speaking,
Doing good, of good Religion,
Nor, indeed, have tongues like theirs
Ever uttered word of falsehood.

"From them flees the Demon Aeshma,
Bloody-speared and of foul Glory.
Righteousness smites evil Falsehood,¹
Fiend of sinful race and darkness;

96. Evil Thought verily smiteth,
But Good Thought in turn shall smite this;
Though the Word False-Spoken smiteth,
Yet the Word of Truth shall smite it.
Saving-Health and Life Immortal
Hunger and Thirst shall smite completely;

¹ Battle of the Archangels and Arch-Fiends. See also Bundahishn 30, 29 below.
Observe the personifications throughout, as elsewhere in sacred literature.
Saving-Health and Life Immortal
Smite down sinful Thirst and Hunger.
Forth shall flee that evil-worker,
Anra Mainyu, reft of power."

To these unequivocal resurrection passages in the Avesta, there is to be added a remarkable fragment, Fr. 4, 1–3 (Wester-gard) which has been preserved from the missing Varshtmansar Nask (cf. Denkart, 9, 46, 1). The piece is in praise of the Airyama Ishya Prayer (Ys., 54, 1), is rhythmical, and is undoubtedly old. The words of the Airyama Prayer shall be intoned by the Sao-shyant and his glorious attendants, at the great day of judgment, as a sort of last trump whose notes shall raise the dead again to life; shall banish the devil, Ahriman, from the earth, and shall restore the world. This is in harmony with the preceding extract and recalls the words of Theopompus, found in Plutarch and his phrase quoted by Diogenes Laertes regarding the continuance of the new order of things.¹ The verses run thus in the words of Ormazd to Zoroaster (Fr. 4, 1–3):

1 The Airyama Ishya Prayer, I tell thee,
   Upright, holy Zoroaster,
   Is the greatest of all prayers.
   Verily among all prayers
   It is this one that I gifted
   With revivifying power.

2 This prayer shall the Sao-shyants, Saviours,
   Chant; and by the chanting of it
   I shall rule over my creatures,
   I who am Ahura Mazda;
   Nor shall Ahriman have power,
   Anra Mainyu o'er my creatures,
   He (the fiend) of foul religion.

3 In the earth shall Ahriman hide,
   In the earth, the demons hide.
   Up the dead again shall rise,
   And within their lifeless bodies
   Incorporate life shall be restored.

¹ Diog. Laert. Ῥωμ., 6, καὶ τὰ ὑπά ταῖς αὐτῶν ἐπικλήσεις διαμένειν.
This plainly speaks of a bodily resurrection even though the bodies be such as Theopompus (Plutarch) says "cast no shadow."

It might be asserted that in the Gathas themselves there is no direct allusion to Zoroaster's personally having taught a belief in the resurrection of the body. That he did teach the doctrine, however, there is little doubt, as may be affirmed also on the Greek authority of Theopompus in the fourth century B.C. The metrical fragment just translated from the Avesta attributes the tenet to him;¹ and all the passages in the Pahlavi books which are based on Avestan authority, bear substantial testimony to the same.² Everywhere in the Gathas the principal theme is the end of the world, the life hereafter, the great crisis and catastrophe, and the ordeal of the molten metal, when the power of evil shall finally be destroyed.³ These awful events are the ones which are regularly associated with the resurrection in the later literature; they are doubtless so in the Gathas. The occurrence of the mighty catastrophe mazé yāonhô in the Gathas is explained in the Pahlavi gloss to the passage as taking place "at the resurrection" (tanū-i pasin). This expression tanū-i pasin, "the future body," and also rist-ākhēzh, "raising of the dead," is common enough in Pahlavi comments on ancient Avestan passages and in other works.⁴

Fortunately there survives in the Bundahishn, drawn doubtless from the Damdat Nask of the original Avesta,⁵ a most interesting description of the last days of the world, the millennium, the coming of the Saoshyant, the resurrection and general judgment, and the annihilation of evil and the reign of good. No more complete account could be given, embracing the whole Zoroastrian view on the subject, than is found in this chapter

¹ Ys. 30, 7. kehrpēm seems to contain a covert allusion by Zoroaster to the resurrection.

² Cf. Bd. 30, 4, Sls. 17, 11–14. So also in the original Varštmansar and Damdat Nasks of the Avesta, as stated in Dk. 9, 33.1 and in the Persian Rivayats 2, 5, translated by West. S. B. E. xxxvii, 14, 421.

³ Ys. 30, 8, cf. Ys. 36, 2; 35, 5; see Ys. 51, 9; 32, 7; 30, 9–10; Yt. 17, 20; Vp. 20, 1.


⁵ Cf. West Pahlavi Texts in S. B. E. xxxvii, p. 14 n, 421 n.
(Bd. 30, 1–33). It is in harmony likewise with the Pahlavi Bahman Yasht (Byt. 3, 43–63) and with the seventh book of the Denkart 1 The Bundahishn chapter is here given in outline, renderings from West's translation being sometimes adopted verbatim. 2

At the close of the last millennium of the world, men will live simply upon vegetable food, milk, and water, and ten years before the Soshans (Saviour) comes, they will desist altogether from eating. At his appearance the dead will arise, each from the spot where life departed. 3 “First the bones of Gayomart (man primeval) are roused up, then those of Mashya and Mashyoi (the Iranian Adam and Eve), then the rest of mankind,” 4 They all assume their own bodies and forms and each will recognize his family, his relatives, and his friends. The preparation of the dead by Soshans and his company of attendants, fifteen men and fifteen damsels, will take fifty-seven years to accomplish. 5 The resurrection finished, a great assembly of the risen dead now takes place. “In that assembly every one sees his own good deeds and his own evil deeds; and then, in that assembly, a wicked man becomes as conspicuous as a white sheep among those which are black.” 6 Then follows the separation of the unrighteous from the just; the wicked are cast back into hell for three days of awful torment, while the righteous taste of the joys of heaven. 7

A star now falls from heaven; the metal in the mountains and hills melts with fervent heat, and flows upon the earth like a river. “Then all men will pass into that melted metal and will become pure. When one is righteous, it seems to him just as though he walks continually in warm milk; but when wicked, then it seems to him in such manner as though in the world, he walks continually in melted metal.” 8 Cleansed and purified by this fiery ordeal, all meet once more together and receive the reward of heaven. An ambrosial draft of the white hom juice, prepared by Soshans, makes “all men immortal for ever and

2Cf. West, Pahlavi Texts (Bundahishn) in S. B. E. v, 120–130.
3See SlS. 17, 13, Bd. 30, 7. 4Bd. 30, 7.
5Bd. 30, 7, 17; Dk. 7th book (West). 6Bd. 30, 10, transl. West.
7Bd. 30, 12–13.
8Bd. 30, 20.
everlasting;'' those who died as adults are restored at the age of 40 years, those who were taken when children, will be restored as if 15 years old; husband and wife together attain heaven, but there shall be no more begetting of children. The powers of evil, however, shall gather once more their forces for a final conflict with the kingdom of good. A mighty battle of the spirits ensues. Each archangel seizes upon the arch-fiend that is his special adversary. The battle described in the metrical Avestan fragment translated above should be compared. Evil is finally routed. The devil Ahriman and the dragon Az discomfited flee away to darkness and gloom. The serpent is burned in the molten metal, hell is purified, Ormazd "brings the land of hell back for the enlargement of the world; the renovation arises in the world by his will, and the world is immortal for ever and everlasting." The heavenly work completed, "all men become of one voice and administer praise to Auharmazd and the archangels"—to him, "the merciful Lord, who makes the final retribution, and who will at the end deliver the wicked from hell and restore the whole creation in purity." The lines of Marlowe's Faustus involuntarily rise to one's lips:

"When all the world dissolves,
    And every creature shall be purified
    All places shall be hell that are not heaven."

Such is the ancient Persian doctrine of a future life, so far as this brief sketch can depict a notion of it. As we review it we must indeed look with eye of admiration at the flashes of truth that shed rays of light into the souls of those faithful worshipers of old. And knowing, as we do, "that our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon this earth," we ought with all reverence feel that God in his divine goodness has left no time and no race without the kindness of his illuminating grace in some way or other; and perhaps properly we may count Zoroaster, the sage of Bactria and religious teacher of ancient Iran, as one among those "prophets which have been since the world began."